University of Alberta

Beginning Teachers' Student Teacher Relationship Experiences

by

Mark Hirschkorn ©

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Abstract

A longitudinal, pragmatic research design was used to study the student teacher relationship experiences of beginning teachers. Beginning teachers, as defined in this research, are those teachers who within the research period moved through the final semesters of their preservice teacher education programs and into their first year of inservice teaching. Many factors that have an influence on their relationships emerged from the research; the legitimacy that they were given as teachers, the school culture, the mentor with whom they paired, and their contact time with students are just a few of many. One result from the research was evidence that the student teacher relationships of beginning teachers influenced their progressions as teachers, but also that their relationships changed as they gained experience. The research concludes with a number of recommendations for educational stakeholders to increase their awareness of the importance of student teacher relationships as well as to identify and situate these relationships more centrally in the development of beginning teachers.

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What is amazing to me is not that half of the beginning teachers quit within five years, it is that half stay.
Ben, first inservice semester, Fall 2006

Chapter 1: Introduction

It is Tuesday morning – 2nd day of the third week of Taylor's eight week final student teaching practicum. So far this semester he has become the teacher of two Science 10 classes and he has been told by his supervising teacher that he will be picking up a Biology 20 class next week.

Taylor is not looking forward to his day.

I can't believe that I got the two worst classes in the school again. What the hell am I going to do if the kids won't listen to me again this class? I tried a pop-quiz last class, but that only made them mad – half of them didn't even pretend to do it – just sat there staring at me. I know that I need to gain some control in class but I don't want them to hate me. Maybe if I can get the mentor to say something to them – read them the riot act – they will smarten up.

The bell rings marking the beginning of the slow migration of the students to their first class of the day. The halls are congested, and the going is slow, but Taylor's students don't care – they know that he won't do anything if they are late.

The second bell rings – classes all over the school are beginning.

"Excuse me – why are you late?" *I can never remember these damn kids' names – I need to work on that.*

The student he is addressing as well as two others ignore him and continue to shamble toward their desks – headphones clearly in place and shielding them from their peers and teachers.

"I said, WHY ARE YOU LATE?!"

Finally, the student turns acknowledging that he heard Taylor and replies "dunno" and then continues on to his desk.

"Well if you continue to be late I am going to send you down to the principal's office."

The student sits, pointedly looking at the other students that are walking in late that Taylor is ignoring, much to the delight of the other class members – but Taylor misses the point. The student is not worried though – he has heard these words before and so far Taylor has not backed up any of his threats. This has almost become a daily ritual – it just happened to be him that was caught today – tomorrow it would somebody else.

"OK guys – get out the homework I assigned to you yesterday." A few students begin to rummage through their things, but most continue to ignore Taylor.

"You there." Taylor points at a student in the front of the class that is just sitting there staring at his desk top. The student looks up.

"Yes you – why aren't you getting out your homework?"

The student looks at him and states "because I don't have it."

"Why not?" Taylor asks.

The student replies "because I didn't feel like doing it – why do you care anyway? You are not my teacher and are going to be gone in a few weeks anyway."

Taylor begins to panic – *what the hell do I do now? How can I be losing control only 2 minutes into class?*

"Well make sure that you get it done next time – you need to do your homework if you want to do well on your unit test next week."

"Sure thing Mr. L." The student replies, and as Taylor turns back to his notes to figure out where to begin, the student turns and smirks at his buddy behind him.

Meanwhile at a Jr. High across town, Christine stands at the entrance to her science class, greeting her students as they enter. It is not really her class, but even though it has only been two weeks, she has already begun to refer to it as hers. Christine is also a student teacher in her second practicum.

"Morning Bill – you look like you are walking a little slowly this morning – you play hockey again last night?"

Bill smiles, nods and retorts jokingly, "well at least I am tall enough to play hockey."

Christine laughs, and shoos him off to his seat.

"Lisa – did you manage to get that problem we worked on yesterday done last night?"

"Sure thing, miss B – but they are really hard".

"Well keep at it – and if you have any more problems flag me down in class or at lunch – you know where I am – and we will work on it."

This has become Christine's ritual – she genuinely looks forward to these little moments with her kids before and during class when she can talk and joke around with them. The

students are seemingly responding well to it as well, and this makes her feel good. She has learned though that not all of the students wish to chat on their way into class and she remembers to limit her interaction with them to a smile and a "good morning".

As the last bell rings, Christine walks back to her desk and notes on a scrap of paper who is missing that day, so it will be easier to remember later when she is doing the attendance while the kids are working.

"Ok, ladies and gents, get out your homework. As I promised, I am collecting it today, so hand it to the person in front of you and I will collect from the front person in each row."

Christine notes that Donovan is not making any attempt to dig for homework or hand anything forward. She moves over and stands next to him and comments to the class.

"Of course if you didn't get it done I am sure you will take the time to find me and explain why you couldn't get it done – I know none of you would just not do it – so there must be some reason…"

"But you know the drill – no homework, no in-person reason or note from home – no grade".

As Christine walks along the front of the class collecting the homework assignments she begins. "Ok then – how about we dive into evidence for chemical reactions today?"

Why study student teacher relationship experiences?

What are the highlights of a teacher's career, year or even day? What aspects do they remember with fondness? What do teachers look forward to when anticipating the upcoming day, or the aspect that most affects them when they have a 'bad' day? When I was a secondary school teacher, the marking, lesson planning, management or supervision were all parts of my day, but it was the interactions and relationships with my students that centered my teaching. Even now as a university instructor, both experienced teachers and preservice teachers (who have taught) have expressed to me the conviction that it is their relationships with students that are the highlight of their teaching day. Human interaction and relationships are the context and vehicle for almost everything that occurs in the classroom. It is almost impossible to imagine teachers and their students in the absence of some form of relationship.

Are these relationships and interactions that teachers have with students static entities? It has been my experience that student teacher relationships change with time.

How much they are valued and even the ways in which we form these relationships (the types of interactions they are characterized by) change as we progress through the various stages of our teaching careers. I began this chapter with a small glimpse into the student teacher relationships of two beginning teachers. Although neither story directly describes content instruction, the relationships that Taylor and Christine are forming with their students is having a large influence on the experiences of both them and their students, and ultimately what kind of teaching/learning occurs in their classes. These described moments, although illustrative of the different types of relationship that exist between teachers and students, are not the final word in Taylor and Christine's relationship journey. They had both already gone through a prior practicum prior to the described moment and continue to change now that they are inservice teachers.

It is my premise that student teacher relationships are a significant feature in the development of prospective teachers, and the nature of these relationship experiences will change as these beginning teachers gain experience; perhaps even contributing to their longevity in the profession. Thus my phenomenon of interest is:

Beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences

Using a variety of data collection methods, this research focuses on and relates beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences; a process valuable in and of itself, as numerous narrative based research studies (such as Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) attest. However, I believe this research will also help to inform ways in which preservice education programs and school systems may ease the transition of their beginning teachers into becoming the experienced veterans capable of thriving within the chaotic world of today's classroom. On a personal note, this research has benefited me as a researcher but even more so as a teacher. I have long held an almost intuitive/instinctual belief in the importance of the student teacher relationship for effective teaching. This research has allowed me to draw conclusions and offer some applications, drawn from the experiences of beginning teachers, on a topic that many authors have described as 'messy' and difficult to quantify.

A concern I have as a researcher is what motivates participants to be involved in any study beyond obligation to an individual or the profession. I believe that participants

must benefit from the study in some way for me to feel comfortable asking them to participate. The nature of this study and my decision to use a group meeting format as one means to draw out the experiences of the participants, provides an opportunity to give something to the participants in exchange for their participation in the study. In the few studies that have used group meeting formats, most notably the work of Rust (1999), the participants were able to contextualize their issues within the group and found opportunities for reflection and analysis that were otherwise unavailable.

> The awesome familiarity in their stories seems to be both comforting and challenging to them. While someone has yet to tell a story that does not have an analog in the experience of someone else in the group, their ability to tell these stories and to know that they are heard as important artifacts of their teaching has a tremendous power. It seems to me that it pulls their lives with children out of the daily-ness that marks so much of teaching and raises it to a level of interest that encourages scrutiny and analysis... sometimes, even reverence. (Rust, 1999, p. 378)

Britzman (2003) used the experiences of her participants, related narratively, to formulate conclusions about teacher education and the programs that her participants were completing. It is the rich description of contexts in her study that creates a connection with her conclusions and the capacity to relate to them. Similarly, my observations and the descriptions from my participants, exemplified in story form and context (related narratively), will attempt to provide enough context for and connection to the student teacher relationships described that I will be able to make conclusions that others can relate to as well. A study based on the experiences of 13 participants makes it difficult to form generalizations due to the small sample size, and the specificity of the described experiences. Clandinin (2000) would likely reflect that research which draws on a narrative methodology defies generalization. Nonetheless, if I can connect to the reader through identification with the experiences of the participants, the conclusions made may be transferable to other contexts. Just as important, it is my intention that other beginning teachers may also be able to connect with the conclusions and experiences described in this study. As Dewey (1938) discusses, one of the values of experience is in its ability to foster growth in an individual by influencing the possibility for (and context of) further experiences; "… every experience affects for better or for worse the attitudes which help

decide the quality of further experiences, by setting up certain preferences and aversion, and making it easier or harder to act for this or that end" (p. 37).

The participants in this study share a common origin; they were all students in the same preservice education program, and all entered the study period with a science minor. Their experiences may provide some insight into what impact this common origin had on their relationship experiences. By being aware of not only what is emerging through my research, but also who the research is most impacting, it should be possible to translate the experiences of the participants into meaningful conclusions that ring true for interested parties who read this research study.

A demand of research is that it provides insight on a topic that in some way distinguishes it from other research that has been done. Thus, even before the study is begun there is a belief in the value of the research. As Eisner (1998) reminds us, however, the researcher must be cautious not to blindly seek to validate this belief;

> It is possible to be so committed to a preconceived conclusion or a particular way of seeing things that we unwittingly focus only on those aspects of the situation or story that supports our preconceptions. (p.55)

There is literature on the importance of student teacher relationships, and some of these findings helped contextualize this study while offering some methodological implications. Nonetheless, a longitudinal study with a focus on beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences is an approach I have not found in the literature. In the next section I discuss the reasons I have chosen this topic. Later, in chapter 2, I review a cross-section of the literature on student teacher relationships.

The value of studying beginning teachers' student teacher relationships

> Knowledge of teacher interpersonal professional changes can help teacher educators understand the needs and abilities of teachers at different points in their careers. It can serve as the basis for customizing pre- or in-service programs: planning interventions, arranging instructional content and sequence; and so on. Studies on the interpersonal aspect of changes in teacher behavior can lead to general improvement of the learning environment, including class management. (Wubbels & Levy, 1993, p. 81).

A number of researchers in addition to Wubbels and Levy (1993), such as Weinstein (1998), Wilson and Cameron (1996), and Rust (1994), suggested that having a better understanding of student teacher relationships provides many insights into the preservice education programs from which the participating teachers emerge; conclusions that I discuss in more detail in the literature review in chapter 2. I believe, however, that teachers are more than a product of the education they receive in university; that their relationship experiences are a culmination of many factors. If student teacher relationships are truly as important as they have been credited to be (once again see the literature review section), what aspects of beginning teachers' experiences are influencing their student teacher relationships? In this study I use the conveyed experiences of the participants as well as my own observations to discuss the role that student teacher relationships play in the growth and progression of beginning teachers. I would like to take a few paragraphs at this point to explain the value of relationship experiences, to me, the researcher.

First, attrition rates for beginning teachers are astounding, far outstripping those at any other stage of their careers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Education professionals often debate why many teachers quit before their teaching careers even really begin. An initiative like this study, which attempts to better understand student teacher relationships should be illuminating since relationships are often portrayed in the literature as powerful motivating reasons why teachers enter the profession and remain there. Leaving a profession so soon after such a huge investment of work, hope, and money suggests a significant alteration to the original intentions of these departing teachers. This study allowed the participants to share their relationship experiences, and as such provided one window for understanding the experiences of beginning teachers.

Second, it is valuable to understand how the interpersonal interactions that occur between beginning teachers and their students change as they progress through preservice education to become inservice teachers. "Many teachers fail to realize that interpersonal relationships with students are as important as delivering a well planned lesson if not more" (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2001, p. 3). Pomeroy (1999) stated that student teacher relationships are a key feature of school life. "…teachers' various approaches to subject teaching were less important to students than the interactive relationships established with the students (p. 468)." Oberski, Ford, Higgins and Fisher (1999) concluded that "…teachers are not so much motivated by a desire to teach as by a desire to have positive relationships with pupils (p. 148)," and thus the technical aspects of teaching, like lesson planning and curricular interpretation, could be taught as a means toward potentiating these relationships and not as separate teaching tools. As Weinstein (1989) summarized, "Subjects' conceptions of 'a really good teacher' are consistent with research indicating that teacher education students conceive of teaching primarily in terms of positive interpersonal relationships." (p. 55)

Third, the relationships that teachers develop with their students are not static; as teachers progress through their education and on into service their focus on, and ability to form, relationships with their students changes. Oberski et al. (1999) and Rust (1999) observed this progression in beginning teachers but also concluded that student teacher relationships significantly impact the type of teachers participants become as well as their longevity in the profession. There has been little work done on how student teacher relationships affect beginning teachers. Instead, most studies have limited their focus to whether interpersonal relationships have an effect on student achievement (Kesner, 2000). "Thus, there is a need to examine teachers' perceptions of their students with an eye toward the interpersonal relationship between teacher and child (p.136)."

At the risk of foreshadowing an aspect that emerged in this research – how the participants 'saw' the student teacher relationship had a large influence on the student teacher relationship experiences they described. Similarly, I approached this research with my own theoretical orientation, my way of 'seeing' and valuing the student teacher relationship. In the next section, I describe my theoretical approach to this study.

Theoretical orientation – my approach to this study

Previously in this chapter I established that I value student teacher relationships as a key component of teaching. This attitude is evident in my teaching as well as in the value I place upon the student teacher relationship for the prospective teachers whom I instruct. Personal orientations in qualitative research are not a liability nor are they elements that are easily replicable. Qualitative inquiry places a high premium on the idiosyncratic, on the exploitation of the researcher's unique strengths and attitudes. Qualitative inquirers confer their own signature on their work (Eisner, 1998). Thus, what follows is a description of my personal orientation to student teacher relationships, and by presenting this overtly, it is my hope that the reader will gain some awareness of my position in this research. I am evident throughout this research. What I see, choose to note, relate and draw conclusions from are all a product of my experience as a teacher and the subsequent attitude I have toward student teacher relationships. In chapter 5, I discuss data that arose from the participants indicating some of my influence on them and thus the study as a whole.

The student teacher relationship is the reason I still love teaching after more than 15 years of being a teacher. I believe it to be at the core of my success as a teacher – in my ability to read classes/individuals, to make the lessons real and engaging, to receive the best from my students, to create an atmosphere of safety, acceptance and understanding, and to adapt as required to the circumstances that arise. I am also convinced that it is the reason I am still a teacher. When reflecting back upon the years that I have taught, I have difficulty remembering a moment with my students that occurred independent of the relationship that I had built with them as a group and as individuals. I do not think I am alone in this regard. When conversing with other teachers, both beginner and experienced, the student teacher relationship is almost always the default referent when teachers discuss the highlights of their day, week or career. The pivotal role that the student teacher relationship has played in my teaching has prompted me to choose it as the focal point of my doctoral research.

Research of any kind is guided and often driven by a way of seeing and doing. My research is driven by Dewey's theory that focuses on, and values, experience. Dewey (as cited in Eisner, 1998) considered experience to be the means through which educational

processes work, hence understanding education requires appraisal of the kind of experience individuals have. Additionally, Dewey (1938) believed that experience is influenced by other experiences – that learning from either personal or others' experiences alters the likelihood of future experiences being pursued. This study which collects the experiences of the participants, but also provides a forum for these experiences to be conveyed among the participants, is rooted in the belief that experiences are fundamental in how we understand and relate to the world.

We do not observe and collect random moments on random topics and then try to cobble together conclusions. Yet, highly directed research that is driven by an attempt to validate a 'new' educational tool, or that strictly adheres to a single methodology does not appeal to me either. As Eisner (1998) states, "it is possible to be so committed to a preconceived conclusion or a particular way of seeing things that we unwittingly focus only on those aspects of the situation or story that supports our preconceptions" (p. 55). I wanted to design a study committed to the topic of student teacher relationships (exploring the topic in a manner not done before), which remained responsive to the contexts and emphasis of the participants.

> Practice is particular and idiosyncratic; hence theory must be treated with flexibility: it must be *shaped* to fit practice. (Eisner, 1998, p. 170)

So much of the methodological literature seems committed to establishing its value and its relative incommensurability with other methodologies. Pragmatically, the participants I have worked with are not aware of these boundaries; agreeing to be participants for topical reasons, not methodological ones. In this section I describe some of my personal orientations that I began this research with; the personal perspectives that influence where I look and what I see, as well as the theoretical orientation of the methodology that I have chosen to use to study the topic.

I began my doctoral research shortly after completing my master's work (Hirschkorn, 2004), which was framed within a grounded theory methodology. I wanted to continue to use an emergent, participant-centered research design in my doctoral work, but was intrigued with narrative design, and the depth of experience and context it brings. The experiences of teachers are significant for the profession when contextualized within the originating situations. Yet, I was concerned that a "classic" narrative is so context

specific and contextual that it has limited applicability outside of the situation described. Additionally, I was concerned with the legitimacy battle that classic narrative studies have 'fought'. Thus, I built into my research a mix of data collection strategies that yield both the experiences of the participants as well as the context in which these experiences originate; a form of methodological triangulation.

Some would label my research as a 'mixed-method' approach to data collection – employing four different methods to observe and record the participants' student teacher relationship experiences. These data collection choices were driven by a concern for the origin of the insights, access to the participants' 'genuine' experiences and making the research process as minimally onerous for the participants as possible – perhaps even giving something back to them. Each of these data collection approaches is detailed in chapter 3. Thus I began my study oriented by the open-ended philosophy: "I believe student teacher relationships are important based on my own experiences, but I do not know what others will relate as significant, therefore I planned to collect as much as possible and sort it out later". The data collection aspect became a mixed-method approach while the 'sort it out later' or data analysis component was done through an emergent grounded theory data analysis design. I attempted not to judge the significance of what I was collecting from the participants while collecting the data; my only criterion for inclusion being – is it related to student teacher relationships? Of course, this personal philosophy was guided and mediated by other research not only so that I would avoid repeating work already done, but also so that I might "stand on the shoulders" of the related work that preceded my own.

Delimitations and explanations

When choosing to study any topic in detail, inevitably the researcher decides on delimitations and offers explanations for the choices made. It is not because what is missed due to setting delimitations does not have value; it is because there would be no end to a research program if every aspect related to the topic at hand was discussed in detail. This study is no exception. What follows is a brief explanation of some of the delimitations of this study.

Literary conventions

Often when reading work of different researchers on a similar topic, they make choices that alter subtly the meaning of what they convey. For instance, in this document I refer to the relationship between student and teacher as a 'student teacher relationship'. Other authors have used 'student-teacher', 'teacher-student', 'teacher student', 'pupil-teacher' and so on. The researchers who use a hyphen are framing their reference as a compound adjective which potentially has a different meaning than the same words without the hyphen, even though more often than not it does not appear that is their intention. Others are attributing origin or authority to the relationship by listing one half of the dyad ahead of the other (teacher student relationship originates with the teacher; student teacher relationship originates with the student). In an attempt to help the reader of this research better understand what I have written, and how I have written it, I have listed below the literary conventions I have employed throughout this document.

- I employ the expression "student teacher relationship" throughout this document. This is in reference to the relationship between student and teacher in general. I do not intend to convey directionality, authority or initiation of the relationship. When I speak about specific aspects of the relationship I am specific in my discussion of them.

- The expression "beginning teacher" is used in this paper as the period in a teacher's development which encapsulates both their preservice years of student teaching as well as the first few years of inservice teaching. I similarly use the terms "neophyte teacher" and "novice teacher" synonymously. The expression "prospective teacher" is only used in reference to teachers prior to the completion of their preservice education programs.

- The participants often reference specific people who cannot be identified due to ethical considerations. Thus in instances in which I directly quote the participants and they have used a person's name I have changed the actual name to only its first letter and capitalized it to conceal the person's identity; for example, Christine becomes "C", or Bill becomes "B".

- Also due to ethical consideration I do not use the actual names of the participants or the places in which they taught. Consistent pseudonyms are used to conceal their identity throughout the document.

- At times in this document I *re*create moments described to me by the participants or observed by me in the course of the research. I present these moments in a narrative form that attempts to illustrate the experience. Of course,

> I do not have access to what was actually thought by the participants at the time, but I have taken this literary license in an attempt to draw the reader into making a connection with the moment and to exemplify the category being discussed. These narratives are not data *per se*, rather, they are closer to stories or fables that are rooted in the data and designed to connect the reader and offer some semblance of what was experienced. I have boxed off and shaded these narratives. The narrative at the beginning of this chapter is an example of one such story.

Experience of relationships

> Every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after. (Dewey, 1938, p. 35)

Beginning teachers' experiences of student teacher relationships are an important part of their experiential world and the process of being and becoming teachers. The ways in which these experiences change as the participants move through preservice education and into classroom practice is also an educationally significant consideration. For example, if a student's summative description of her experiences during her introductory student teaching semester is "caring whether the students like me" and this changes to a perspective focused on "making sure the students know why they got the mark they did" during her advanced student teaching semester, this would signal a change in relationship orientation that could be important. Relationships are unique to each dyad that makes them up, but individually and collectively they have a large effect on teachers and the teacher's development, classroom climate, identity, reputation, career progression and satisfaction. These relationships also, of course, have significant effects on the teachers' students – a focal point perhaps of a different study. This study is focused on beginning teachers' experience of these relationships and on whether and how these experiences change as the teachers move through preservice education and into the initial years of their teaching careers. This study is not about, for example, how these beginning teachers *form* relationships or how these relationships affect student achievement.

Relationships as dyads vs. experience of relationships

Student teacher relationships are dyadic in nature and an exhaustive characterization of such relationships would require input from both the teacher and student involved. One could argue from a more sociological perspective that student teacher relationships occur within the context of the complex social grouping that is the classroom, and that even a dyadic analysis would miss important dimensions of the relationships. The *experience* of student teacher relationships, however, is unique to each individual making up the dyad. This study, which is focused upon beginning teachers' experience of the student teacher relationship, has the potential to deliver educationally valuable findings despite the dyadic nature/origin of student teacher relationships. A complementary study of students' experience of student teacher relationships would also be significant, but is beyond the scope of the present research project. In practice, teachers rarely have access to students' perspectives on their relationships, yet teachers are continually altering their thoughts, actions and interactions based on their *experiences* with the student teacher relationships they have formed. It is valuable to study these experiences in relation to the development of beginning teachers.

'Good' and 'bad' relationships

This project is not about judging the quality of student teacher relationships and deciding whether they are 'good' or 'bad'. This study is about describing beginning teachers' experiences of the relationships that exist between students and teachers. Teachers may label their experiences with students as 'good' or 'bad', but that is their own characterization of their experience of the relationship, not something that I am ascribing, nor an explicit focus of this study. Dewey (1938) cautions, "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other" (p. 25). It is my goal to consider all of the experiences described by my participants with a student teacher relationship orientation and to attribute significance based on the data analysis model detailed in chapter 4.

Highly contextual studies resist generalizations

Classic narrative studies typically use one-on-one techniques to allow researchers to embed what they are learning from one or two participants into a rich description of context and motivation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This creates an opportunity to connect with the experiences described in the study, allowing the reader to resonate with and learn from the experiences described in the research. Generalizability is difficult due to the specific, in-depth descriptions of the participants and their circumstances that narrative studies require. When beginning this research I valued the resonant quality and richness that narratives offered, but sought a way to have my study create resonance and offer context while allowing some measure of transferability to other contexts by the researcher, not just the reader (the concept of 'resonance' is a key aspect of this research and is discussed in detail in chapter 4). Some of the ways that I did this was by increasing my number of participants to 13 from the one or two that is typical of narrative studies, by adding a group meeting component to the data collection so that the participants had access to experiences and ideas beyond their own, and by utilizing a survey that had been used and validated by other researchers with much larger research populations. Learning to teach is a complex process, as teachers are continually bombarded with the concerns, reactions and insights of assorted stakeholders (all in addition to the prospective teachers' own perspectives and reasons). It is not possible to place the participants in a bell jar and only expose them to a series of manipulated variables and observe the outcome; that is, *cause* a change, *observe* the effect. But by exposing the participants to experiences outside of their own, I had the opportunity to see how individuals resonate (or not) with these other experiences and thus gain some awareness of their relative significance. Let me emphasize though, I believe there is significance to the experiences of each individual even in the absence of outside frames of reference or reaction. Participants in this study are unique. However, it is reasonable to expect that their concerns and experiences might be mirrored by other beginning teachers and this research could serve as a vehicle that may be valuable to other beginning teachers.

Marrying flexibility with longitudinal research

Ruspini (2002) cautions researchers doing longitudinal research, that it can be difficult to design a longitudinal study with enough flexibility to accommodate the unanticipated events which ultimately influence the research. By choosing to study the beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences longitudinally, through all of their preservice teaching and into their inservice teaching, there was a risk that significant experiences would be lost as the pragmatics of each semester came into play. Geelan (2003) summarizes well how best intentions, research, and life can sometimes be tough to combine. "...the activity of research is itself an activity of imposing order on the chaotic contexts of life experience in order to be able to talk about them" (p. 2).

Thus, when designing this study I felt it was necessary to build some flexibility into the research design, but knew that unanticipated situations would develop that would need to be accommodated. Some examples of these unanticipated situations are:

- Getting permission from all of the school divisions in which my participants were teaching. Applying for and getting permission to observe 13 participants, in four different semesters in school divisions province wide was logistically quite difficult. All of the divisions except two eventually gave me permission (which led to my not being able to observe two of my participants teach in a single semester). It also influenced the frequency with which I could visit some of my participants (distant locations).

- Coordinating the schedules of 14 people for group meetings and school visits while complying with the assorted rules/restrictions of each school. Remarkably, I was able to come close to my originally conceived schedules, but I found myself needing to 'roll with the moment' more than once, resulting in not all of the participants being in attendance at each meeting.

- Motivating each participant to remain in the research and to continue to complete each aspect required of them as participants in the research. So much of research is 'above and beyond' the already hectic lives of these beginning teachers. For instance, with each passing semester I noticed a decline in the frequency of entries in the participants' reflective journals.

Despite the difficulty of anticipating what would become an issue for the research and the participants each semester, it is worth noting that all 13 of the original participants continue to be a part of the research – not one participant withdrew. In fact, even now

after the data collection period has finished, the relationships formed between many of the participants continues.

The participants

It is in my position as a science education instructor at the University that I made contact and formed my initial relationship with, what were then, my students, some of whom became my participants. It should be noted that no one was approached to be a participant until I was no longer their instructor. This benefited the study since I already had formed a relationship with my participants and this diminished the time it took for a trust relationship to develop between us. As van Manen (1984) discusses – every relationship is inexplicably unique, and embracing the most productive connections with participants, is as he describes it, necessary. However, by drawing students from my science education class, it limited the range of possible participants to individuals who were science minors, and who were completing their practical components, and entering the profession as teachers in successive semesters. Thus, the experiences shared by the participants were delimited to individuals who began as science minors – not from a random sampling of education students. However, rarely was a point made by any of the participants prefaced with a declaration of subject matter orientation; rather, the discussion was about relationships they had with their students. The group did not define themselves as 'Science', 'English' or 'Drama' teachers – even though all of those subject majors were present in the group.

In chapter 2, I discuss the work of other researchers who informed my study. As mentioned, reviewing other research guided me throughout the research. The literature review that is presented is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of all topics related to student teacher relationships, but it is a representative sampling of research already done. This research literature is treated more specifically in chapter 5 where I describe and expand upon each of the data categories.

Something that's really forced itself on my attention this year is the role of trust and relationship in teaching. It's not really something teachers are ever told explicitly – some know it instinctively, a few see it for themselves, and some will just never understand.
David Geelan, Weaving Narrative Nets, 2004, p. 122

Chapter 2: Literature Review

What is the student teacher relationship?

Joseph walks into Ben's 10:15 a.m. physics class, looks around to see if anyone has noticed he has walked into class, does not see anyone he feels close enough to strike up a conversation with and wanders over to his desk. He pulls out his notebook and busies himself with something in his backpack. After Ben finishes writing the day's objectives on the board, he notices Joseph sitting somewhat isolated from the rest of the class that has arrived, so he makes a point of walking past Joseph's spot and comments to him that he has a pretty cool MP3 player. Ben asks Joseph if he can make any recommendations to him since he was thinking of getting one for himself. Joseph looks at Ben, a bit hesitant at first, but then as he warms to his subject and sees that Ben is actually listening, offers an energetic explanation of memory capacity, sound quality and portability. Sensing that he could go on for a while, after two minutes Ben explains he had better get ready for class, thanks Joseph, and then continues on back to his desk.

Hinde (1987; as cited in Pianta, 1999), stated the following about student teacher relationships "Interactions between two people, over time and across many situations, come to be patterned; when they do, these patterns reflect a relationship shared by the two individuals. (p.29)" Hinde's definition is typical of the elements portrayed in the literature as the significant contributors to the relationship between two people; interactions, shared situations and time. But these relationships are not isolated entities. Pianta (1999) further stated that individual relationships between two people are actually systems, which are part of larger systems such as the classroom or school. This system perspective is the key to understanding how relationships between children and teachers form, how they are maintained, and how they are important for development.

Conceptualizing relationships as systems is seductive, as it suggests a dynamic, changing quality that reacts to inputs and outputs based on the systems' intrinsic nature. In a human context, the patterns of a relationship are a product of the natures of the people involved and the input of the circumstances they share over time. Yet this seems too simple, as it reduces relationships to logical outcomes based on inputs and characteristics. Clandinin

and Connelly (2000), for instance, would likely characterize this approach as reductionist and not reflective of the full complexity of relationships or the contexts in which they form. From my experience, relationships are dynamic entities that evolve over time, inexplicably changing in ways that are difficult to anticipate. Pianta (1999), however, eventually stated that

> a relationship between a teacher and a child is not wholly determined by that child's temperament, intelligence, or communication skills. Nor can their relationship be reduced to the pattern of reinforcement between them. Thus, relationships have their own identity apart from the features of interactions or individuals (p. 72).

Is the Joseph example above explained by the definition offered by Pianta? I believe most teachers would see this example as a teacher using a moment that offered itself to create/strengthen the relationship between Joseph and her/himself. It has the elements described by Pianta. It is an interaction, it shares the context of location and subject and the reader is left with the feeling that it is part of an ongoing connection between the teacher and Joseph over time. What is missing from this explanation though, is the experience of this moment. Did the teacher feel good about this moment, or never give it another thought? Was the interaction driven by motivation of the teacher to create relationships with the students or was it a reaction to seeing a person who would benefit from a little effort on his/her part? Did Joseph feel closer to the teacher, or was he operating at a more meta-level and was he wondering if this was just a shallow attempt by the teacher to get him to like him/her? This also leaves out the reactions of the other students in the class who may have observed the interaction between the teacher and Joseph. Did the individual relationships between the teacher and them change as a result? Will Joseph now be thought of as the teacher's pet perhaps?

Relationships may be systems as Pianta (1999) suggested, but it is the experience of the relationships that interests me. Dewey (as cited in Eisner, 1998) considered experience to be the means through which educational processes work, hence understanding education requires appraisal of the kind of experience individuals have. It is significant to realize that beginning teachers interpret their relationships in a common manner or that their relationship experiences are being shaped by being in the same preservice education program (or not).

There are a number of other explanations in education literature that offer descriptions of what student teacher relationship are or how they can be formed. Morganett (2001) suggested that positive student teacher relationships are formed through teachers conveying that they care about their students both collectively and individually – that they are interested in them personally and academically. Wubbels and Levy (1993) believed that the key to understanding any relationship lies within the communication that exists between the student and the teacher, and that the communication involves two levels: (a) a report aspect; and (b) a command aspect: "The report can be understood as the *what*, and the command as the *how* of communication. The report conveys the content, information, or description; the command caries instructions about how to interpret the report" (p. 12). These two aspects are present in any communication between individuals, and cannot be separated. In the Joseph example above, the report aspect would be the topic of MP3 players and their features, and the command aspect would be the bearing, facial expressions, intonations, articulation and context of Ben (the teacher) and Joseph. It is easy to see how important the command aspect is to communication and to relationships when one imagines how differently Joseph would have reacted if the teacher had sat on his desk during their conversation, or had been distracted by that day's lesson or the other students while talking about MP3 players.

> The need to distinguish between the report and command levels is especially important in beginning relationships. This is for example true for first-year teachers, who are often confronted by students 'trying them out' (Brooks, 1985). The students basically want to know what the teacher will and will not permit. This process chiefly takes place at the command level, below the surface of their communication about the subject taught. (Wubbels and Levy, 1993, p. 5)

As Wubbels and Levy explained, beginning teachers are often insecure with their subject or lesson and thus tend to focus on these aspects during their lessons. This emphasis on the report aspect of their communication and ignorance of the command messages that they convey to and receive from their students often leads beginning teachers down relationship pathways that were not their intention. This would suggest that as beginning teachers become more experienced, they develop a greater awareness of the command level of communication with their students.

The mutuality of instruction and student teacher relationships

Student teacher relationships are not isolated occurrences that operate separately from the other aspects of classroom activity; they are continually forming and changing with and because of the other aspects of classroom life. It is the interdependence of the student teacher relationship with the other aspects of classroom life, such as achievement and management, which makes the relationship so important to the development of teachers.

Weinstein (1998) surveyed 141 student teachers in an attempt to determine the relative importance they placed on the different aspects of classroom life. This survey asked the participants to rank the relative importance of 'interpersonal', 'pedagogical' and 'managerial' elements of their classes. He found that beginning teachers saw the management of their classrooms and forming interpersonal relationships as separate entities, and saw pedagogy as an element that contributed to both. Similarly, Oberski, Ford, Higgins and Fisher (1999) reported that student teachers delineated between the discipline they were able to maintain in the classroom and the relationships they had formed with their students. Essentially, student teachers recognize that a well planned and executed lesson can help control their classes and develop bonds with their students but they fear jeopardizing their relationships with the students for the sake of classroom management. This inability to see the interconnectedness of all three elements, Weinstein (1998) suggested, is one aspect that beginning teachers need to develop.

> Prospective teachers need to understand the ways that positive interpersonal relationships and engaging, well-orchestrated lessons contribute to order. They also need to appreciate that caring can be enacted by teaching well and by creating safe, productive classrooms. (p. 162)

Wallace (1993), and similarly Morganett (2001), suggested that the relationships that teachers have with their students are directly related to the level of attention and caring that teachers give to their students. However, Wallace (1993) also contended that students in the higher grades place less emphasis on the caring aspects of the teacher and more on the information-giving role of the teacher because marks and potential futures after graduation play a larger role in their expectations. Thus for older students there is a stronger relationship between how the students evaluated their relationships with their teacher and their achievement in that teacher's class. This difference between older and

younger students suggests that another aspect influencing the student teacher relationships that beginning teachers develop will be the grade levels they are assigned to teach.

If students' cognitive competence can be predicted by the emotional and social qualities of the student teacher interaction (Pianta, 1999), then this means that there is a connection between the student teacher relationship and the ability of the students to develop cognitively and achieve in that teacher's classroom. Yet Wubbels and Levy (1993) suggested that there may be a conflict for teachers who wish to develop both high achieving students and a supportive environment in their classrooms. They found that higher achievement resulted when teachers were somewhat strict, yet the students developed more positive student attitudes toward the teacher when they characterized the teacher as flexible. Regardless of these apparently conflicting conclusions, it would seem that the ability to form relationships with students is significant for beginning teachers to develop and maintain.

Importance of student teacher relationships

Regardless of whether student teacher relationships are defined as interactions in different contexts over time, level of caring, establishment of communication, or if they are defined in reference to the context of a system with pedagogical, managerial and interpersonal components, there is an abundance of literature declaring the importance of student teacher relationships. The following few sections detail some of the literature establishing the relative importance of student teacher relationships to teachers and to their students. It is worth noting at this point, however, that some of the key stakeholders in education do not share the opinion that student teacher relationships are valuable. In a brief literature review by Weinstein (1989), for instance, he discussed how policy makers, educational theorists and practicing teachers tend to conceptualize 'good teaching' differently.

> Policy makers often define what is good teaching in terms of outcomes (e.g. achievement gains on standardized tests) or compliance with direct instruction models of instruction. Educational theorists and researchers speak of masterful teachers who can comprehend, reason, transform, and instruct (e.g. Shulman, 1987) and teachers who can reflect on the purposes and consequences of their actions (e.g. Zeichner and Liston,

> 1987). In contrast, both prospective teachers and practicing teachers tend to describe good teachers in terms of warm, caring individuals who enjoy working with children. (p. 59)

Ladson-Billings and Darling-Hammond (2000) reviewed the teaching standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) which are organizations responsible for assessing the standards for teacher organizations and noted, at best, an undervaluing of student teacher relationships and at worst, an absence of any reference to them at all. These organizations demanded "hard proof" for their recommendations (from which I infer quantitative statistics), to which Ladson-Billings and Darling-Hammond responded, what sorts of "words, gestures, and pieces of evidence can be collected that demonstrate the connection between a teacher and her students?" (p. 6) Aside from the disparity between what these sanctioning agencies and many teachers/researchers consider to be the importance of student teacher relationships, the response from Ladson-Billings and Darling-Hammond does indicate a relative lack of research into the importance of the student teacher relationship for teaching. In a stirring and open criticism of the American National Teaching Commissions (ANTC) report following American President, George W. Bush's 'No Child Left Behind' (2001), Cochran-Smith, (2004) discussed how teachers are being made into the scapegoats for the social ills of American society in order to "distract attention away from those actually responsible for the monetary, trade and industrial policies that influence economic competitiveness and lay the blame instead on the schools." (p.196) Cochran-Smith bemoaned the loss of humanistic education, embodied by aspects such as student teacher relationships, for the sake of exam results and anticipated economic competitiveness that would result from better exam scores; noted that not one reference to the relationship between student and teacher is even hinted at in 'No Child Left Behind'. Whatever the reasoning, it is clear that not all educational stakeholders share the opinion that humanistic pedagogical aspects such as the student teacher relationship are as valuable as external exam results, for example. Nonetheless, many researchers do believe in the importance of the student teacher relationship, and in the following section I discuss some of their conclusions.

Student teacher relationships are important

The literature has portrayed student teacher relationships as important to both teachers and students (as you might infer from the topic). The aspects of positive student teacher relationships that are considered to be most beneficial for teachers are (a) more easily facilitated management and students' increased motivation, (b) opportunities to demonstrate a caring attitude toward students, and (c) increased enjoyment of teaching, and thus often increased longevity in the profession. Morganett (2001) found that students who felt that their teachers accepted them were more likely to do what these teachers asked of them (e.g., assignments) and were, consequently, less likely to be disruptive in the classroom. Pianta (1999) was more subtle in his description of how his classes benefited from a positive relationship with his students:

> I noticed how as we came to know each others' patterns of behavior that we would anticipate each other and that interactions often were smooth and effective, and I relied a lot on our knowledge of each other when I actually taught skills or had to manage behavior. At the time I did not know it, but these experiences demonstrate the value of building and enhancing relationships with these children. (p.3)

Weinstein (1998) discussed how caring for your students was seen as synonymous with developing healthy student teacher relationships by his participants, and that it was in the relationship that aspects such as trust, listening, recognizing feelings, being sensitive and getting to know the students' backgrounds emerged. Caring for their students is a powerful motivator for teachers, and Wubbels and Levy (1993) hypothesized that some teachers are able to bypass the stagnant and frustrating stages of their teaching career by deriving strong intrinsic enjoyment from student contact. "This is a further indication that strong interpersonal skills are vital for teacher professional development." (Wubbels & Levy, 1993, p. 82)

The aspects of positive student teacher relationships that are portrayed as most beneficial to students are improved achievement, motivation/enjoyment, increased feelings of security and increased ability of students to 'use' adults more effectively. Many authors seem reluctant to directly state that healthy student teacher relationships improve student achievement, nonetheless, these authors imply that improving student attitudes toward the teacher and the class (which is a direct result of the relationship

between the teacher and the student) improves the achievement of the students in that class (Fisher & Rickards, 1996; Pianta, 1999; Rickards & Fisher, 1998). For example, Wallace (1993) found "that pupils work on personalized views of their interaction with teachers to the extent that liking or disliking teachers is of primary significance to 'getting on well' in a subject" (p. 35). Likewise, Shechtman (1989) and Stuhlman and Pianta (2001) asserted that human relationships are crucial not only for the affective well-being and growth of students, but also for their intellectual development and motivation to succeed. One assertion that most authors stated without qualification was the value of the student teacher relationships to the students themselves.

> Student teacher relationships are a key feature of school life. Wallace (1996), in her study of secondary school students, found that teachers' various approaches to subject teaching were less important to students than the interactive relationships established with the students (p. 36). (Pomeroy, 1999, p. 468)

> Pupils emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships with understanding teachers who were prepared to listen. Most importantly, teacher-pupil relationships, like engagement with learning, carry an emotional commitment and this is likely to be reciprocal. (Wallace, 1993, p. 39)

Not surprisingly, student teacher relationships are important to students at all levels of achievement and motivation. Pomeroy (1999) in his work with excluded students (students at risk of dropping out, or who have already dropped out), determined that the three key factors that students identified as the most problematic for them was their relationships with their teachers, their relationships with their peers at school, and factors outside of school. Of the three, the most saliently and consistently described experience were their relationships with their teachers. Clearly, relationships between teachers and students can mean the difference between a positive and a negative experience for students at school.

> Teachers could come with very different approaches to their subject, but these were less important than the interactive relationships they established with pupils. The most successful teachers had strategies which melded their management of pupils to the content and style of their subject. Some were able to shift the mood of the class from humor to seriousness in ways which, as reported, suggested nothing less than mutually respectful relationships. (Wallace, 1993, p. 36)

Students are tough to characterize consistently not only because of their various backgrounds and ability levels, but also because there is a great range in their physical, emotional and intellectual maturity. Pianta (1999), in his own review of the literature, found that student teacher relationships are a key aspect in providing students with a feeling of security and with a willingness to take risks in the classroom (such as risking being wrong when asking questions):

> Child-teacher relationships stabilize a child's emotional experience in classrooms (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1992), provide structure and guides for his or her interactions with peers (Howes, Hamilton, and Matheson, 1994), serve as a source of security that supports his or her exploration and mastery (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 1997), and provide interactions that help shape the child's self-regulation. (Pianta, 1997, p. 27)

Further, Pianta (1999) suggested that student teacher relationships can often act as a counter to problematic parent student relationships. Essentially, the teacher represents adults in a supportive and non-threatening manner.

> Thus non-parental adults, such as teachers, can be targets of attachment-related strategies that have developed in other relational contexts and, more important, these adults may provide the child with new relationship experiences of sufficient strength, intensity, and consistency that can enable the child to use adults more competently. (p. 55)

Regardless of whether it is most beneficial to teachers or students, the relationship between them is important. This study, which focused on the experiences of beginning teachers, drew upon what these beginning teachers believe to be important in their development. A factor that the literature identified that adds to the teachers' perspective on relationships is what students characterize as important for positive student teacher relationships.

Students' opinion of a positive student teacher relationship

> What are some of the elements in developing good teacher-student relationships? One element involves teachers communicating to students that they care about students both individually and collectively. Students want teachers to be interested in them personally and academically. (Morganett, 2001, p. 260)

The above quote from Morganett (2001) suggests that the key elements of 'good' student teacher relationships are teachers' taking interest in their students and communicating that they care for and respect them. The results of individual interviews that Pomeroy (1999) conducted with students support Morganett's conclusions but are more specific in which aspects of interactions convey interest, caring and respect. For example, Pomeroy demonstrated that consistency in how the teachers approach conflict situations with students is important in students' perceptions of teachers. Other aspects mentioned were if the teachers were being perceived as imparting skills and knowledge, and if they made efforts to be friendly to their students:

> The defining feature of the ideal teacher-student model which enables teachers to communicate 'caring', without inadvertently 'parenting', is dialogue. Respectful interactions communicating the teacher's belief in the students' worth are also a key feature in the ideal model of teacher-student relationships. (Pomeroy, 1999, p. 477)

For the students whom Pomeroy interviewed, a *good teacher* is synonymous with a teacher who can establish meaningful relationships with students, which underscores once again the importance of the student teacher relationship for the success of both.

Influences on the student teacher relationship

My intention in this literature review is to offer the reader a representation of the dominant themes that I identified after sampling the research on student teacher relationships. I began the review at the beginning of the research, before I had a clear idea of the emphasis that would emerge. The review creates an interesting contrasting mechanism for the research and the categories that I derived from the data. First, it introduces the prominent researchers in the field of student teacher relationships—people such as Pianta (1999), Cochran-Smith (1991, 2004, 2006), and Darling-Hammond (2000). Second, this literature review gives some indication of the current and past focus on student teacher relationships and beginning teachers. For example, a topic that other researchers have discussed often is the impact of preservice education on beginning teachers' student teacher relationships. Perhaps this is because of researchers' desire to investigate the criticisms that education programs are receiving from formal national policy documents such as the *Holmes Report* and *No Child Left Behind* (Cochran-Smith,

2004). Whatever the reason, the role and influence of preservice education programs on teachers' student teacher relationships is a prominent theme in the literature. Thus, having completed much of the literature review near the beginning of my research, I came to assume that the university would play a large role in my participants' relationship experiences, and I believed that this research would help to inform the participants' preservice education program - an emphasis that, ultimately, the participants did not mirror. I also reviewed more targeted literature. For example, I sought to identify other researchers' conclusions on the various categories that emerged from my research. Finding other research on these categories was at times difficult, which is perhaps a testimony to the value of this study and its longitudinal and contextual emphasis.

The preservice education programs from which teachers graduate influence their student teacher relationships. In the following section I elaborate on how these influences are presented in the literature.

Preservice education programs influence student teacher relationships

> *I think I am pretty good at writing lessons now, but I'm really worried about how the kids are going to treat me. Am I going to be tough enough to get them to do what I want them to do? I really like kids, but I used to be one of those ones that treated student teachers really badly. What am I going to do?*
>
> (Preservice education student, Fall 2005)

'Reflective practice' has become the mantra of many education programs, and in many cases is a required component of the practical portions of teachers' preservice education. The intention behind formalizing the process of evaluating daily teaching experiences is to aid beginning teachers in learning from their experiences in the classroom, such that the value of the errors and successes made while learning to teach is not lost. Rust (1999) for instance, is quite explicit in her endorsement of supported opportunities for preservice and inservice teachers to reflect upon their own funds of knowledge, explore their attitudes and beliefs, and extend the repertoire of skills and strategies that forms the underpinnings of their work. As can be seen in the student's quote above, prospective teachers are certainly motivated to become more than what they believe themselves to be before entering the classroom. Unfortunately, even though teachers often engage in

systematic reflection (whether voluntary or mandated), it is not the interpersonal aspects that are the focus, but rather the more technical aspects such as the lesson plan, management strategies or the curricular emphasis of that lesson (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2001). Ironically, Wilson and Cameron (1996) suggested that most student teachers begin their education programs with a 'pupil centered', caring orientation, and with the emphasis in schools on curriculum delivery, and efficient classroom management, and then they become more technical: "It is likely that once they succeed in their quest to become efficient managers (and to be an efficient classroom manager is central to the culture of many schools) they may not return to value the personalized, student centered perspectives they once held." (p. 194)

Wilson and Cameron (1996) further suggested that the real task for teacher educators and preservice education programs is to help prospective teachers maintain their existing empathic perspectives toward their students throughout their preparation courses. Student teachers need to be convinced that a strong personal commitment to their students can translate into better classroom management, more efficient delivery of their lessons and other positive instructional outcomes. Oberski et al. (1999) suggest that this is a matter of changing the philosophical approach in education programs. They suggest that most education programs instruct from a "deficit perspective", in which prospective teachers are viewed as lacking teaching abilities and therefore need to be taught the techniques for teaching. Teaching skills such as managing 30 students, lesson planning, interpreting curriculum, creating evaluation tools, and so on are identified as missing (yet necessary), and are therefore taught to prospective teachers. Oberski et al. (1999) also suggested that a more effective approach would be to adopt an "ability perspective". That is, tools could be offered to the prospective teachers that build upon what they already know and are motivated by a decidedly more constructivist orientation:

> The ability perspective, on the other hand, would build on the knowledge that teachers are experts at forming relationships with pupils and highly motivated to do so. They should therefore be given a tool (discipline techniques) which allows them to form these relationships effectively in a classroom with 30 pupils. It is a different approach with a different mind set.

> ...it seems that teachers are not so much motivated by a desire to teach as by a desire to have positive relationships with pupils. That means that techniques for classroom management, including the maintenance of discipline, should be taught as a means towards establishing those relationships, rather than toward being able to teach. This may seem an arbitrary difference, but it is not: it reflects a difference between a 'deficit' and an 'ability' approach to teaching. (Oberski, Ford, Higgins and Fisher, 1999, p. 148)

The relationship between students and teachers can be a key element before the prospective teachers actually begin to form these relationships with students. Nonetheless, Oberski et al. (1999) do admit that beginning teachers tend to focus on their own behaviors, and as they become more experienced in the classroom, their attention shifts toward design and instruction and finally to what the pupils are learning. They reflected that it may be counterproductive for education programs to abort this period of inward focus by prospective teachers, as it may be necessary in their development.

Rust (1994) suggested that the espoused beliefs of preservice teachers

> are a patina developed during preservice education and laid over beliefs about human interactions and being that are developed over a lifetime of learning, observing, and interacting both in and out of schools. This patina might be functional during the individual's time in preservice education but can be quickly eroded or cast off during the new teacher's encounters with the "real world" of schools. (p. 215)

Are student teachers simply being indoctrinated by their preservice programs into believing that the techniques they are being taught are the best ways to resolve their fears of being teachers? Upon entering the schools, does the reality of their new chaotic world cause them to discard what they have recently espoused at university and to adopt anything that allows them to survive? If that is the case, then learning to teach should simply be an apprenticeship, with new teachers essentially being treated as inexperienced copies of the teachers already in the schools, for better or for worse. Goodland (1990) warned that it is dangerous for teachers to intentionally become what the school system already represents, because we are then condemned to accept its shortcomings. Prospective teachers bring with them abilities, energy, and background that may help students to become more than what they are capable of becoming within the existing system. I believe that this hope stems in part from anticipation of the relationships that

teachers can form with their students and, consequently that preservice education programs have an obligation to develop this ability. In later work, Rust (1999) admitted that

> what they learned in their preservice programs did not show up as a patina that they quickly shed in the workplace. They were focused from the beginning on their students' learning and, by their own accounts, they drew heavily on the skills and knowledge that they acquired in their preservice programs. These were essential to their learning how to negotiate the system on behalf of their students. (p. 375)

It appears that prospective teachers are adaptive enough to find ways to merge their years of personal interaction with the techniques they learn at university and can consequently benefit from both worlds. There is still hope.

Beginning teachers, however, experience a shock when they become 'the teacher.' All of the discussion and anticipation prior to actually stepping in front of a class is rarely enough to fully prepare preservice teachers for what they encounter as they assume the teaching mantle. Yet prospective teachers are familiar with the *front-stage behaviors* of teaching, having witnessed and internalized many of these aspects of classroom life as students over a seeming lifetime of observations (Ryan, 1986; as cited in Rust, 1994). Is the transition to teacher such a large leap from the role of student? Rust suggested that preservice education is not doing an adequate job of preparing teachers for the *backstage behaviors* of teaching. For example, balancing competing demands, coping with the amount of time spent planning and marking, and even undertaking the networking necessary to establish support networks and to meet administrative requirements all pose substantial challenges for student teachers. Kincheloe (2004) added that if the shock is big enough, beginning teachers are so overwhelmed that they often leave the profession and that this issue must be dealt with at both the preservice and inservice stages of teacher development. Given the high teacher attrition rates that Darling-Hammond (2000) reports, this beginner's shock is real and must be addressed.

Kyriacou (1993) suggested that new teachers enter the profession with a decidedly humanistic approach to teaching that remains with the students until they go through a block of teaching, at which point

> many student teachers started to make a distinction between the humanistic attitudes they held and the difficulty, or appropriateness, of

> trying to behave in a way that was consistent with such attitudes in 'the real world of the school'. This was particularly evident in the extent to which some student teachers felt that 'ideally' pupils should be given some control over their own learning, but felt that 'in practice' it was not always desirable to try to do so. (p. 82)

It is interesting that Kincheloe (2004), in describing the many changes that teachers undergo over the years of their early development, noted a progression from a relationship orientation to a technical focus and then eventually to a more student-focused, human-centric orientation. This suggests that a better understanding of student teacher relationship experiences would inform not only the point at which many teachers begin, but also the point to which the many who survive the crucible of beginning to teach return. In the last section of this literature review I describe some of the progressions that beginning teachers have been observed to undergo as they become more experienced teachers.

Student teacher relationships depend upon inherent ability

Preservice education programs, from which beginning teachers graduate, are believed to have an influence on the relationships that student teachers eventually form with their students. It is the intent of these programs to prepare teachers for the classroom, and even though many programs do not make it an explicit goal to teach prospective teachers how to form relationships with their students, these programs are portrayed as influencing what beginning teachers strive for. Regardless, there is a school of thought that believes that the ability to form positive student teacher relationships is more a product of inherent ability than of any education that beginning teachers receive. Lourdusamy and Khine (2001) are quite explicit in this belief:

> The nature of academic subjects does not seem to have differential influence on the development of interpersonal behavior of trainee teachers with their students. So it may be viewed that interpersonal teacher behaviors are more a product of personality rather than training per se. (p. 11)

In support, Oberski et al. (1999) concluded that student teacher relationships are more a result of existing skills that trainee teachers possess than what they are taught.

> Most (but not all) teachers were very successful (in their own view) in establishing relationships with pupils and teacher colleagues during their first month of teaching. As teacher training programs do not normally focus on relationships as a major theme, especially considering the constraints on what is to be taught, it is reasonable to assume that the new teachers were using existing rather than new skills here. Yet clearly these existing skills offer a platform from which to allow teachers to develop or launch new skills. (p. 136)

Wubbels and Levy (1993) similarly stated that the teaching strategies that beginning teachers need, such as lesson planning, are alien to them and thus they need to be taught these skills under the assumption that they will begin from 'ground zero'. However, the ability to develop student teacher relationships stem from a lifetime of forming relationships. Thus, why teach interpersonal skills to beginning teachers when they have these skills and could use them as a starting point to develop the other skills that teachers do not have when they enter their education programs? Pianta (1999) listed some pre-education qualities of teachers that directly affect student teacher relationships. Styles of emotional expression (calm or tense), reactions to emotional needs, and beliefs regarding children's social behavior (whether emotions are important or not) are all qualities that directly affect the relationship between students and teachers and that preservice teachers do not learn in their education programs. Wallace (1993) also highlighted the emotional component of student teacher relationships - a domain that once again usually falls outside of the instructional intent of education programs.

It has been my experience that relationships are contingent upon aspects such as context, emotional state, perception, and even intent. Including all of these aspects would be difficult in preservice education programs. However, these programs do teach skills with which to manage learning, which, ultimately, is the venue in which student teacher relationships are born. Student teacher relationships are influenced by both the training and inherent qualities of beginning teachers. In the next section I discuss how the beginning teachers' personal context can also influence their student teacher relationship - aspects such as culture and personal background.

Influence of culture/personal history on interpersonal relationships

> Understanding the relationship-oriented behavior of a teacher with a given student requires consideration of many elements – training and knowledge, current concerns or experiences (e.g., financial, family, marital), hobbies or interests, and so forth. Thus it is critical not to approach teachers as if the only dimension of their experience or the only resource (liability) they bring to a relationship is what is seen in the classroom (Goodlad, 1991; Molnar and Lindquist, 1990; as cited in Pianta, 1999, p.31).

The literature is quite detailed about what researchers believe are the qualities that influence the relationships between students and teachers. The origin of these qualities becomes the next question, however, as we try to understand the elements that indicate success and whether it is possible to create or screen for these elements. Differences in the capacity of teachers to form relationships with their students involve more than just training and ability; indeed, the nature of teachers and their students is an important factor in the relationships that develop, and their natures themselves are influenced by any number of experiences throughout their lives. As an example, the types of relationships that a teacher who was abandoned as a child forms will likely be different from the types of relationships that a teacher who comes from a family of 12 children will form. This is not a reflection of ability or education, but rather is a product of personal history and experience. It is important to remember that even though this research focused on teachers, the histories and experiences of both teachers and students are pivotal to their relationship. Pianta (1999) suggested that because teachers are more mature and are in a more powerful position, they have a greater influence on student teacher relationships than students do, but that does not negate the experiences that both parties bring to the relationship.

> I do not understand why they keep sticking teachers that can only speak English into these schools in which over half of the class isn't even from Canada and can't speak English. Aren't there any teachers that came from their countries? (Former Vancouver high school student, reflecting on the dominance of Asians at his school in Burnaby; personal communication, May 13, 2005)

The attitude portrayed above hints at an issue that Kesner (2000) discussed. He suggested that relationships between teachers and students are made more difficult when the respective individuals bring the values and practices of their cultures with them.

Conflicting cultural norms directly affect not only the behaviors of those involved, but also the ways in which they interpret various verbal and nonverbal signals. Kesner (2000) argued that misunderstanding culture might lead to misinterpretation of ability as well as intent. However, he also asserted that the research in this area has focused predominantly on the academic outcomes of the cultural divide to the exclusion of affective outcomes. Kesner would also like to see research on the influence of culture on the interpersonal relationships between students and teachers. Rickards and Fisher (1998) suggested that culture may also be significant to interpersonal relationships because teachers do not seem to be as aware of cultural differences as their students are, even though they appear to alter their behavior in classes of different cultural compositions.

Actual countries of origin and first-language proficiency are not the only cultural issues that are present in classrooms and that affect student teacher relationships:

> Gender of teachers and children is another significant factor to explore in the child–teacher relationship. Research into the dynamics of teacher–child interactions in the classroom is not new and suggests significant differences in teachers' interactions with boys and girls. (American Association of University Women, 1992; as cited in Kesner, 2000, p. 137)

Wallace (1993) also advised that gender may be significant to interpersonal interactions because boys generally demonstrate less interest in the more personal dimensions of student teacher relationships than girls do. Arguably, all of the cultures that a person identifies within classrooms may have an influence on the relationships between students and teachers, and these relationships are a result of not only the teachers' education and inherent ability.

It is worth mentioning that the influence of the personal histories of the respective individuals who form student teacher relationships is a difficult (if not impossible) aspect to quantify. Kesner (2000) suggested that children who come from secure parent-child relationships appear more apt to form secure teacher-child relationships, but he admitted that he did not know the impact of the teachers' own family/personal history on the student teacher relationships they form. This study did not focus on the psychological origin of the types of relationships that teachers develop with their students, but rather on the experience of the relationship and how these experiences may change as they progress as teachers. The origins of the types of relationships they form are important, but by

focusing on the relationship experiences, the participants in this study became their own reference point for these relationships. It is reasonable to expect that the personal histories that influence teachers in their first semester of teaching will still influence them in their fourth semester of teaching. Remaining focused on a rich description of the teachers' experiences over the length of the study has made it possible to draw some broader conclusions about how to help teachers in this progression, but I will provide rich descriptions, not prescribe treatments or attribute experiences to psychological origins.

Time influences student teacher relationships

Olivia is a beginning teacher. In addition to a love of kids, she has demonstrated an ability to read classroom contexts and react appropriately. Her science background is quite well developed as she has taken a number of courses in chemistry, physics and biology, yet she is not arrogant about this and is still very willing to make sure that she is well prepared for her classes each day. Her university instructors clearly believe she will be a wonderful teacher, and she has received wonderful evaluations from her various mentor teachers. However, she graduated in February and due to no jobs being available within the city in which she is living she has decided to become a substitute teacher until the fall.

Although Olivia is fictional, if this was the description of an actual beginning teacher it would seem she has the potential to be a wonderful teacher. What would you anticipate her experience will be as she walks into her first classroom as a sub? Will it be filled with the warmth of interaction that could be possible were she the regular classroom teacher? Likely not. There is a major deterrent impeding Olivia's ability to form quality relationships with her students - time. Not only does Olivia have no time to form relationships with her students, but her students are also aware that her time with them is limited. Student teacher relationships are a product of ability, education, personal history/origin, and time. Substitute teaching is an example of how time influences relationships, because generally "subs" are not expected to form lasting relationships with their students.

> The fact that relationships (as dyadic systems) take time to develop, and that time is needed for the regulatory influence of these relationships to take shape, supports school and classroom practices that maximize and lengthen contact between children and their teacher. (Pianta, 1999, p. 29)

Time was a key element in this study as well. A longitudinal study of this nature that explored the student teacher relationship experiences of beginning teachers as they progressed from only five weeks of contact time with their students to an entire semester of teaching is clearly using time as a consideration. Kesner (2000) suggested that contact time alone may be the difference in the relationships observed between students and preservice teachers on the one hand, and students and inservice teachers on the other. The extra contact time gives more experienced teachers a history of interaction that is not possible for their beginning counterparts. Nonetheless, most teacher preparation programs carefully control the contact time between beginning teachers, subjecting them to increased contact as they progress through their programs.

Student teacher interactions are unpredictable

Continuing with Olivia above, on her way to class that first day she comments to a peer "I have always hated hockey, I just can't understand why anyone plays the game, it is so violent." Unfortunately, she is overheard by one of her soon-to-be students who is an avid hockey fan and has sacrificed a lot to become the hockey player that he is. This inadvertent comment made completely outside of her teaching environment will likely shadow the relationship that she could form with this student in her class. Realistically, relationships between students and teachers are continually impacted in unplanned and unintentional ways, and being aware of this influence is helpful, even if it is unavoidable. As an example, Reiff (2001) characterized in detail the experiences of student teacher Rebecca as she proceeded through a typical day of teaching. What stands out in this description is how much of what Rebecca experienced with regard to her evolving student teacher relationships was not a product of intention, but rather more a function of circumstance. Rebecca wondered at the end of the day whether teaching is ever what one intends, or is it always one continual compromise? Pianta (1999) likely would have supported Rebecca's conclusion in that he suggested that relationships between teachers and students are often unpredictable, but that these relationships can benefit from willingness, open communication, and teachers' intention of genuine caring.

Other aspects that influence student teacher relationships

After I had completed the data collection and analysis phase of this research, a number of categories emerged that the participants described as having an influence on their relationship experiences. Other researchers had already discovered, labeled, and identified some of these categories, and they are a part of the original literature review. The influence of the length of their practica on their relationships—in other words, time—would be one such example. However, other data categories such as the role of the participants' content competence in their relationships or their belief in their legitimacy as teachers—were not aspects that were discovered as a part of the original review of the literature. After establishing these as data categories, I returned to the literature and, with a more focused perspective, found research that spoke to some of these derived data categories (although not all). This does not diminish the significance of these categories; it just says that their presence in other research was not as evident when the original literature review was done. The discussion of the findings of this other research in chapter 5 is embedded within the data-category discussion by which it is contextualized. My choice to present this literature in chapter 5 indicates that the categories were not driven by the review of the literature, but, rather, were derived as a function of the analysis model that I used. It was not until the analysis was complete that I found literature that supported, refuted, or remained outside of the experiences of the participants. I believe it is valuable to have a literature review act as more than just background information for the topic at hand, and by presenting the reader with the temporality and reasoning behind its creation, I am also allowing the literature review to be used as a contrasting mechanism. There is significance in noting which aspects of the data I anticipated (through the literature review) and which emerged independent of the dominant patterns evident in the literature. I hope that the reader gains some sense of these differences.

Relationships between students and their teachers are influenced by many factors. The inherent ability of the teachers, the programs from which they graduate, the cultural backgrounds and orientations of the teachers/students, the personal histories, even the contact time and circumstances that the relationship partners experience all have an impact. What results is a series of experiences for the teachers (and their students) that

are important but unpredictable in their outcome and that are themselves influenced by the relationship that exists between these teachers and their students. Assuming for the moment that the relationship is a product of all of these factors, does the experience of the beginning teacher influence the relationship as well? What follows is a detailing of some of the literature that suggested the student teacher relationships of beginning and experienced teachers are different. Thus there is some form of interpersonal evolution that teachers undergo as they gain teaching experience.

Changing student teacher relationships: The progression of a beginning teacher

> If we want to improve schools then, it is important to understand more about teachers and about the role they play. It is important to understand how teachers change and grow so that we, as teachers and teacher educators, can make informed decisions about how best to support the change process. (Stephens, Gaffney, Weinzierl, Shelton, & Clark, 1993; as cited in Flores, 2003, p. 2)

What is the difference between an experienced and a beginning teacher? In a word, experience. Wubbels and Levy (1993), for instance, found that beginning teachers tended to be more tolerant, and their students perceived them as more cooperative than the more experienced teachers. Nonetheless, experienced teachers have broader behavioral repertoires than their less experienced counterparts have and, as a result, tend to have more options available to them when they are presented with the various circumstances to which teachers are subjected daily.

Evidence of a progression

People change as they age and accumulate professional and personal experiences. It is understandable then that several progressions are discussed in the literature. However, the majority of these progressions are of the changes that occur to inservice teachers throughout their careers, not the progressions teachers make from the time that they begin their student teaching into their inservice years. Even more difficult to find is research specifically focused on the student teacher relationship changes that occur during this

same period. Nonetheless, the research that has been conducted with these beginning teachers indicates that there are differences between preservice teachers and their inservice counterparts with regard to student teacher relationships.

Wilson and Cameron (1996) used a series of journals from education students in their first to third years of their teacher education programs to gather insights into the differences. They found that the first-year student teachers were primarily concerned with the personal relationships they established with their pupils. Second-year student teachers, however, began to experience conflict between maintaining this caring perspective and meeting instructional and management concerns. Third-year student teachers seem to have replaced their view of students as people with the view of students as learners and are decidedly more professional in their approach to the relationships they form with their students. It is interesting that, despite the clear differences in the participants, Wilson and Cameron were not convinced that the changes they were observing were good changes. This move away from caring for individuals toward group academic awareness is, in their opinion, not a positive change. They summarized the changes in three generalizations:

1. Student teachers develop from a 'teacher centred' to a 'pupil centred' view of effective instruction.
2. Student teachers develop from a 'control' view to a holistic view of classroom management.
3. Student teachers develop from a personal to a professional/outcomes view of relationships with pupils (p. 193).

Oberski et al. (1999) similarly observed a focus in beginning teachers on the importance of relationships that with time and experience evolves into a focus on management and discipline. Of particular note is that these beginning teachers rarely conceptualized relationships as a concern, only as an achievement. In other words, they saw problems with students as discipline problems, but successes with students as good relationships. This suggests that, by default, beginning teachers interpret the student teacher relationship as capable of being only positive; otherwise it would be called a management problem.

Rust (1994) portrayed a progression as well. She saw first-year teachers as going through a survival or novice stage compared to the holistic stage that is the hallmark of

experienced teachers, whom Rust described as competent (compared to first-year teachers).

Wubbels and Levy (1993) compared the differences between the relationships that beginning teachers form with those that more experienced teachers form. They suggested that beginning teachers lack the broad behavioral repertoires that come with experience, and this creates inconsistency in their relationships with their students. As a consequence, students influence student teacher relationships more than they do those with experienced teachers. Wubbels and Levy reported that the students themselves described their teachers as changing from more cooperative and disorganized to more task oriented and structured as they gain experience:

> Relations between teachers and their students improve in the first four years of their career. This improvement helps raise both student achievement and attitudes. Soon after, however, a steady change takes place which is both welcome and unwelcome. Teachers appear to decline in cooperative behavior and increase in oppositional behavior, a change which negatively affects student attitudes. They also increase in strictness, however, which can heighten student achievement. (p. 148)

Regardless of whether the evolving ability of teachers to form student teacher relationships is viewed as a positive or negative, knowledge of these professional changes can be used to increase the effectiveness of programs designed for beginning teachers. Wubbels and Levy (1993) discussed using knowledge of teachers' interpersonal professional changes as the basis for customizing pre- or inservice programs, planning interventions, arranging instructional sequence (and content), improving the learning environment, or even improving classroom management. Kyriacou (1993) stated that the progression of student teachers who are teaching for the first time is similar to the progression of "new" teachers who have accepted a teaching position and are beginning as inservice teachers.

Regardless of the conclusions that may be drawn from the experiences that beginning teachers described, Rust (1999) reminded us that even the way that beginning teachers tell stories is different from the way that experienced teachers tell them. This suggests that at some fundamental level teachers are changing conceptually as well as behaviorally, and this change is evidenced in the way that they think about their own

experiences. However, a changing relationship with a student does not necessarily mean a worse (or better) relationship (Oberski et al., 1999).

This literature review has provided background and context for research focused on the student teacher relationship experiences of teachers as they progress through the first few years of teaching. I have focused on teachers and what the literature has detailed as significant for them with regard to student teacher relationships and how that may change with experience. Goddard and Foster (2001) reported that this is an avenue of research that is not often pursued in the literature and that that they knew of only one study (Bullough & Baughman, 1997) that described the growth and development of a single teacher over many years. My research, which similarly approaches the experiences of beginning teachers' student teacher relationships longitudinally, does offer insights not readily evident in the literature. In chapter 3, I discuss the methodology I used to explore the relationship experiences of beginning teachers.

I believe that much of the justification for the appropriateness of a research approach must be in terms of the usefulness of the research outcomes for the purposes for which the research was originally conducted (Donmoyer, 1997, March).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Study overview

This study was not an intervention; it was not intended to fix a perceived problem, nor was its purpose to create theories from data generalizations. In this study I listened to and observed beginning teachers' stories and explored and described their student teacher relationship experiences:

> These stories constitute teacher lore, as Schubert (1991) describes it. They contain the new teachers' theories in action. Making sense of the day to day in a supportive, collegial environment where reflection, careful listening, and thoughtful, informed response are constants enables them to look at their work in ways that are not available in the bustle of the school day or among friends who cannot know what Ryan (1986) calls "the backstage behaviors of teaching." (Rust, 1999, p. 370)

One of the opportunities that I have had at University as a science curriculum and instruction instructor was to work with preservice teachers before they entered the classroom for the first time. When these preservice teachers finished their on-campus components (the first eight weeks of the semester), they were placed in schools in and around a large urban city to complete their first student teaching practicum. It was from this group of preservice teachers that I invited students to be participants and 13 of them volunteered (please see the end of this chapter for a brief discussion of the ethical considerations taken, Appendix F for the letter of information and invitation, and Appendix G for the consent form). I chose to work with all 13 participants despite that being quite a large number for a study rooted in narrative origins so that the participants would have a broad range of experiences to reflect their own against during our group meetings (and more selfishly, so that I had a broader range of experiences to draw from when collecting and analyzing my data). Participation remained voluntary, with participants having the right to opt out at any time. I worked with these participants through two student teaching practica as well as into their first year of inservice teaching.

As a requirement of this research, participants were asked to participate in scheduled group meetings, keep reflective journals, allow me to observe them teach, and to complete a 'Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction' (QTI) developed by Wubbels and Levy (1993). A discussion of the methodological philosophy with which I approached this research is included in this chapter. In addition, I have provided a brief description of the research participants and a description of the data collection strategies I used in this research. I conclude this chapter with a description of the ethical considerations involved in conducting this research.

Methodological philosophy

I began this study with a drive to explore and relate beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences and to do this narratively and longitudinally. I was intrigued with the idea that research data could be based on the experiences of participants and that I could draw strongly on the actual context of these experiences. I wanted to describe and create stories that promoted resonance in the reader; such a strong sense of 'ringing true', that the reader would connect with the experiences of my participants and transfer them to their own situations or experiences – retrospectively, in the present or perhaps as an influence on their future choices and actions. I did not want to derive an underlying theory or 'to do' list, rather I wanted to offer resonant opportunities to the reader by portraying the experiences of those who participated in my research from which to learn and connect.

> I felt it [a narrative methodology (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1996), incorporating impressionist tales of the field (Van Maanen, 1988)] was most able to capture the richness, complexity and human quality of school life. Theories, however complex, must simplify life by abstracting some facets and ignoring others. Stories, too, highlight some facets and hide others – a process of selection is involved. I believe, however, that stories, through allusion and shading and other fictional techniques, can capture facets, faces and voices in classrooms that are missed by theories and the practice of theory building. (Geelan, 2003, p. 43)

As I continued to read the narrative literature, however, I became hesitant. I realized that narrative studies bring with them methodological requirements that make it difficult to use them as a guiding approach on a topic such as beginning teachers'

relationship experiences. There were difficulties, both theoretical and pragmatic. What were my intentions? Was I comfortable drawing from predominantly one approach to research? Would a narrative approach allow the participants' voices to be heard? Would I inadvertently be lending authenticity and power to the opinions of just a few individuals? Doing a narrative study, more than many other methodologies, seemed to invite a battle over legitimacy and even validity. I read the accusations and defenses from both opponents and proponents and decided to adjust my study in an attempt to address some of these issues before it began, based on my own reactions to the ongoing debate in the literature (see Geelan, 2004, for a summary of common objections narrative researchers are typically asked to address). Modifying research to address potential shortcomings is not new to research design. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2006), in a discussion of mixed-methods research, recommended choosing methods that address the circumstances, the research question, and the strengths and weaknesses of different data collection methods in such a manner as to maximize the effectiveness of research and minimize the potential problems. Declarations of methodological affiliations, in their view, are a limit to choosing a research design that best fits the research at hand. I came to conceptualize my research as narrative in philosophy, but as much more pragmatic in practice. I wanted the experiences of the participants to be the origin for the data, rendered in both storied and comparative forms (this comparative aspect is not typical of narrative research), but for me, my methodology needed to be tied to an awareness of the study's pragmatic implementation. Clandinin (2000) points out, narrative research is partly characterized by a lack of formative theory driving the research process. In this section I discuss the narrative methodology, upon which aspects this study drew, which aspects I have modified, and how I have united this approach under the banner of what Morgan (2007) labeled a *pragmatic methodological approach.*

Concerns and accommodations

When I originally conceptualized this study as a classic narrative, my plan was to choose one or two participants and immerse myself in their pedagogical lives. I would observe them and work with them daily, remaining focused on their student teacher relationships, as we moved through the successive semesters in their journey to become inservice

teachers. In the end I would write their stories as well as I could, be as open as I could about my role/presence in the research, and allow readers to construct what they would from the participants' experiences and contexts. There is value in doing a study such as this, but I realized that this type of study was not resonating with me as a researcher. I could see four problems with this approach that I was not prepared to accommodate.

First, I was concerned with whose student teacher relationships they would be. If I had worked with a participant daily in the immersive environment that is teaching, I would have become quite inextricably a part of the student teacher relationships in the class. This would not have been the participants' relationships; they would have been *our* experiences and *our* relationships. A study focused on the experiences of *beginning* teachers' experiences (a category to which I no longer belong as a teacher of 12 years) needs to remain focused on the experiences of that beginner, not on a joint amalgam of relationships that would have been the result had I been an integral part of the classes' daily routines and interactions. Thus, I chose to set up a visitation schedule that would allow me to observe the participants teaching and interacting (and to get some sense of the context), but to do so in a manner that would allow the ownership of the class and relationships within the class to remain in the hands of the research participants. Additionally, this increased the value of the other data collection vehicles (such as the journals and group meetings) as a source of insights for the daily classroom happenings.

Second, I did not know where the student teachers (and eventual inservice teachers) would be placed for their teaching. Aside from the logistical problem for me as the researcher of actually visiting all of the potential locations on the regular basis that a narrative study would entail, I also needed to gain permission from the school divisions to do the study. A core component of the eventual application to get permission to do research in the assorted school divisions was that my presence in the schools would be non-invasive and have minimal impact upon their students and teachers. Attempting to get permission to work in a school division as pervasively as a narrative study would have required would be much more difficult and would likely have been refused by some of the school divisions, particularly because the study is longitudinal and my in-school presence would have been for almost two years. As Eisner (1998) asserted, the length and

unpredictability of qualitative research makes it a necessity to be adaptable to the situations that arise:

> Qualitative research often takes weeks, months, or even years to conduct. It is simply not possible to predict the flow of events as they unfold, so researchers must adjust their course of action based upon the emerging conditions that could not have been anticipated. (Eisner, 1998, p. 170)

By prospectively working with only one or two participants, had I been denied access to work with them in the schools, my research would have been forced to end or be radically altered prematurely. Thus my application to the school divisions emphasized that I would be impacting their teachers and student minimally. The result was that only two of the school divisions (of the eventual 12) denied me access to observe the participants teach, and because I had other data collection mechanisms in place, these two participants remained active and valued contributors to the research (and I was able to observe them teach in other semesters).

Third, I recognize how busy beginning teachers are and how stressful their lives can become as they seek to master what they need to in order to become successful teachers. I did not wish to make this even more difficult for my participants by placing unreasonable time-consuming research requirements on them in addition to what they would already be taking on during this time. Minimizing the impact on my participants, perhaps even giving something back to them has always been a priority of mine. As a result I chose to increase the number of participants I was working with and to make my 'invasion' of their time a priority to minimize, which was later told to me to be appreciated by the participants. Not only so that the research could continue if a few opted out, but also so that it built in flexibility of when they could complete the various research requirements – such as when we met for our group meetings. Drawing on a larger participant pool allowed the scheduled group meetings to continue in the absence of the few that could not make a specific meeting, and increased the number of related experiences during the meetings as well as the number of people in what the participants later described as their "support group". Nonetheless, even with a concern for minimizing my 'research footprint' on the participants, as the participants progressed in their teacher development, they became more and more resistant to spending their time on any activity outside of their day to day teaching requirements. I believe that had the research been any

more time intensive than it was, I would have begun to lose participants. Balancing the time and schedule of the research with the requirements of the participants' teaching was a delicate and continually negotiated aspect of this research.

Last, I was concerned with the specificity of narrative studies. There is value in exploring the experiences of a single individual, and the rich contextual descriptions allows some measure of transference for readers. However, the ownership for the transference is upon the follower of the research – not the writer of it. The onus upon the researcher is to create rich descriptions of experience and context so that the reader is drawn into relating it to their own experiences. I wanted to build into the research the capacity for the researcher to contrast the experiences of the participants. This contrast could be with the other participants, but potentially I also wanted to be able to compare the experiences of my participants with other research and contexts that share similarities with my own – not just leave it up to the readers to make those connections of experience. It was also part of the reason that I chose to use a group meeting format as one of the data collection vehicles. I wanted to provide the participants with an opportunity to speak, hear, and react to the experiences of the other participants and to evaluate their reactions as they connected these experiences to their own contexts.

The pragmatic approach

The result of these concerns and accommodations is this study, research that was guided by valuing experience and context - value indicative of narrative research – yet remaining aware of the pragmatic implementation and application of the research outside of the immediate context of the participants. Being guided by the pragmatics of implementation, while remaining aware of the theoretical orientations behind the utilized methods, has recently been discussed in the research literature by Morgan (2007) as a *pragmatic methodological approach.*

When researchers declare a research interest, methodology, or theoretical framework, in a manner of speaking they are communicating to the reader, "This is the phenomenon I am studying, the glasses through which I see, the language I am using, and the one you will need to follow the work I am describing." It sets a schema and a set of rules that previous researchers have recognized and approved. However, just like the

division of the sciences into biology, physics, astronomy, and so on, these subjects/ methodologies/theoretical boundaries are constructs. They are not necessarily incommensurate even though they are often portrayed as such:

> Rather than treating incommensurability as an all-or-nothing barrier between mutual understanding, pragmatists treat issues of intersubjectivity as a key element of social life. In particular, the pragmatist emphasis on creating knowledge through lines of action points to the kinds of "joint actions" or "projects" that different people or groups can accomplish together. (Morgan, 2007, p. 72)

Aikenhead (2006) discussed a number of examples in the literature in which researchers have recommended combinations of methodologies/paradigms in research programs and noted that Frederick (1991), Lindahl (2003), Pedretti et al. (2004), Reiss (2000), and Shapiro (2004) all found that longitudinal studies are particularly amenable to integrating several paradigms. Clandinin and Connelly (1996) combined case studies and narratives, Chang and Rosiek (2003) wrote narratives as sonatas, and White (2001) integrated quantitative and interpretive theoretic paradigms - just to indicate a few examples of how methodological lines can be blurred. Similarly, this research blurred these methodological boundaries as a result of my desire to use the value that narratives place on experience, context, and story; the pragmatics of collecting data for a longitudinal study on student teacher relationship experiences as the drive behind how to collect the data; and an emergent grounded theory categorical analysis framework to attribute importance and patterns to the data.

In this research I collected the data with an orientation toward and a value for the participants' experiences (in the contexts in which they originated) – an approach borrowed from narrative research. However, the choices for which methods to use to obtain these data were driven by a loyalty to the circumstances of the research and, more particularly, the participants. I was not concerned about following the prescriptive methods of a particular methodology or using its theoretical orientation to explain what I was observing. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2006) explained that

> taking a non-purist or compatibilist or mixed position allows researchers to mix and match design components that offer the best chance of answering their specific research questions. Although many research procedures or methods typically have been linked to certain paradigms, this linkage

> between research paradigm and research methods is neither sacrosanct nor necessary. (p. 15)

The analysis framework that I chose is emergent in design and employs a categorization framework drawn from grounded theory research. However, I did not seek a unifying theory to explain the categorizations that were created, as is typical with grounded theory. My goal was to organize and describe the experiences of the participants by presenting them in the context in which they occurred, by providing a forum for the participants to share and react to other beginning teachers' experiences, and by comparing them with the experiences and contexts discussed in the research literature. Classic narratives render the data in story form and encourage the reader through the richness of the described experiences and contexts to connect to the findings. I used stories drawn from the experiences of the participants as contextual and illustrative tools or as a way to draw the reader into conceptualizing the situations in which the aspect described originated. I did not conceptualize these stories as data, at least not in the same sense as the manner in which I present the data in chapter 5 – in a categorized and comparative form.

I would summarize my research as follows. Epistemologically, I believe in the central position of experience in how we know and connect to the world. As Dewey (1938) suggested, it is important to focus on the experience of actions in the world rather than the existence of either a world outside of those experiences or experience outside such a world. Methodologically, I wanted to centralize the participants' experiences in the context in which they originated and relate these experiences narratively and categorically. I sought descriptive categories and, further, additional comparative frameworks such as the group meetings. The methods I chose were driven by a focus on the best way to draw out the participants' genuine experiences longitudinally, successfully, and with as little negative impact on the participants as possible. This approach resonates with me as a researcher and offers an effective mechanism for studying the focus of this research: the student teacher relationship experiences of beginning teachers.

Research participants

This is a study of beginning teachers' experiences. Specifically, it is an exploration of beginning teachers' relationships with their students and any changes that occurred in these relationships as they gained experience. Of course, any relationship between teachers and students has two participants - the teacher and student. Teacher-teacher and student-student interactions also exist and likely contribute to what the student teacher relationship is and will become. Nonetheless, I limited this research to the perspectives, experiences, and insights of the teachers because, despite the relationship formed by both parties, teachers tend to dominate it (Pianta, 1999). Even more importantly, as teachers undergo professional growth, rarely, if ever, are they offered any perspective other than personal reflections on their student teacher relationships. The perspective of their students rarely informs their relationships with them, and this study, which is based upon the experiential reflections of developing teachers, reflects this focus on teachers' perspectives. As Pianta suggested, student teacher relationships are influenced by the characteristics of the child as well as other variables, but teachers' perceptions and descriptions provide insight into how relationships influence outcomes such as student success.

> Thus, associations between these perceptions of relationships and the child's behavior in the classroom and in other contexts could, in fact, be partly due to the characteristics of the child (e.g., temperament, problem behavior, etc.) that relate to both the teacher's perceptions and the other variables, including observed child-teacher interactions. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, it is clear that teachers' perceptions and experiences of relationships with students provide a window on classroom processes that do, in fact, correlate with important indicators of child success or failure. (p. 70)

This study was a compromise between a willingness to listen to as many stories and reflections as possible about beginning teachers' relationship experiences and the necessity to limit myself to a group whom I, as a single researcher, could effectively study. Most narrative-based studies limit themselves to just a few participants to give more richness and depth to the experiences related. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) were explicit about how much depth of context and history is required to convey some sense of the influences that act upon an individual; a *thick description* (a term they borrowed from

Geertz, 1973) is necessary to connect to the experiences of the individual. Much of the quality of the information is contingent upon the quality of the relationship between the researcher and the participants who are the focus of the study, as well as the time invested in researching the complete story of the participants' experiences in an effort to address the research question. This, then, limits the applicability of these experiences to the broader context in which these teachers find themselves. Do the experiences of only one or two individuals relate to environments beyond the immediate context in which these individuals find themselves? Clandinin and Connelly (2000) believed so. They did not see sample size as a restriction in narrative studies because the goal is not to be able to generalize (deduce from the data a theory that can be applied in another context), but rather to be able to have the related experiences create a connection and understanding for the reader; they proposed that *apparency* or *verisimilitude* are better terms than *validity* and *reliability* to describe the goals of narrative studies with few participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that *transferability* is a better description of the outcomes of narrative studies than *generalizability*. Additionally, a narrative approach assumes that researchers gather most of their data through individual interviews, journals, and observation. If the research is expanded to a larger group of participants, it becomes more difficult for the researcher to form relationships of sufficient trust and depth with each participant, even though there would likely be a broader range of experiences and locations with which to contextualize the data.

Rust (1999), however, found that working with larger groups increases the quality of the data obtained by providing a social context for the participants that is lacking in individual interviews. Specifically, she invited groups of beginning teachers to meet and share their experiences on specific topics of discussion. The opportunity to be surrounded by other teachers at a similar level of development who were experiencing similar issues encouraged teachers to open up and provided starting points from which to contextualize and share personal experiences. Rust found that by allowing the participants to drive the conversations and remaining open ended, she was taken into areas that would have been missed in individual discussions with her participants. Additionally, the participants demonstrated strong motivation as they began to use the group meetings as a reflecting/ venting/coping opportunity that they did not have through self-reflection. I was in a

unique position to create a similar opportunity for my participants, and I give a description of the group meetings as well as the other data-collection methods in the following section. See Appendix E for brief biographical information on the participants. It provides contextual information on the participants that aids in the conceptualization of their experiences that I discuss in chapters 5 and 6.

Data collection methods

This study is an attempt to explore and relate beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences. Relationships, however, are complex; and as Pianta (1999) pointed out below, it is necessary to use more than a single data collection approach if a richer analysis of teachers' relationships with their students is desired. Geelan (2004) similarly suggested that multiple data collection devices can act as a form of method triangulation, which ultimately increases the relevance of the data collected:

> The relationships that teachers form with children, although important sources of support or stress to the children, affect teachers' sense of themselves and, in turn, are affected by the teachers' current and past relationships. Thus, teacher-child relationships are embedded in a system of relationships that itself has a history and a development trajectory. In this way, child-teacher relationships cannot be easily reduced to the interactions one might observe in a classroom, and no single assessment device adequately describes such a relationship. (Pianta, 1999, p. 122)

As a result, I chose to use three methods to gather data on the student teacher relationship *experiences* of the participants: (a) group meetings in which the participants and I met according to a negotiated schedule during their teaching periods to discuss their experiences and react to the experiences of the other participants, (b) maintenance and (eventual) submission of a reflective journal throughout the weeks in which they were teaching, and (c) observations of the participants in context as they taught and interacted with their students. The sections that follow detail the reasons for my choice of specific data collection methods and how I used them in this study.

Group meetings

Gathering teachers' student teacher relationship experiences was difficult. It involved capturing the stories that they told me and situating them within a chronology and context that lent richness, nuance, and meaning to the stories. This became more difficult when I attempted to capture the stories of more than one individual. The authenticity (or possible distortion) of the stories, the ownership of the stories, and the risk of losing the participants' voices in the final document (Creswell, 2002) were also hurdles that challenged me. These problems were present in addition to the immense time requirement to sort through all of the information collected from each participant.

Nonetheless, I believe that it was important to listen to beginning teachers use their own words and emphasis to describe their student teacher relationship experiences. It was valuable to give them a chance to relate their own experiences to others who were undergoing a similar process. Thus this study, although narrative in philosophy, is not a classic narrative with respect to the detail with which a single individual's experience is explored. It was more important to me to find a broader applicability and context for the collective experiences of a number of individuals than to immerse myself in one participant's story. Britzman (2003) shared this approach and discussed how student teachers construct their own narratives, but always in relation to the narratives of others.

Is it possible to combine the strengths of a narrative focus – the depth of personal connection, the research focus driven by the participants' concerns, and the removal of barriers between research and practice - with the broader interaction and applicability of a more socially oriented and broadly applied research method? Rust's (1999) work indicates that it is indeed possible. Rust created a group-meeting environment in which teachers who were in the early stages of their careers (preservice through second year of teaching) met periodically to discuss the issues they were encountering. She found that the voluntary nature and co-membership of the group were important contributors to the participants' development as teachers and allowed them to practice what she called "authentic conversation as professionals" (p. 378):

> We see the stories that these new teachers tell of their lives as student teachers and beginning teachers as "acts of meaning" (Bruner, 1990) through which they are making sense of the work of teaching. These stories emerge in our conversations as spontaneous vignettes – generally triggered

> by something someone has said or a question that has been asked. They are focused on classroom-related issues that are in some way problematic: such things as concern about a particular child, an aspect of curriculum, the requirements set by an administrator or relationships with other adults in the classroom and the school. (Rust, 1999, p. 370)

> The awesome familiarity in their stories seems to be both comforting and challenging to them. While someone has yet to tell a story that does not have an analog in the experience of someone else in the group, their ability to tell these stories and to know that they are heard as important artifacts of their teaching has a tremendous power. It seems to me that it pulls their lives with children out of the daily-ness that marks so much of teaching and raises it to a level of interest that encourages scrutiny and analysis, sometimes, even reverence. (Rust, 1999, p. 378)

It has been my experience that in open-ended, individual interviews such as those used in narrative studies, the researchers' guidance and preliminary questions often set limits on the information that the participants offer. In contrast, a real strength of creating a group meeting of peers is that the resultant conversation, essentially a form of reactive reflection, is spontaneous and elicited not by prior design, but by the circumstance and concerns of the participants. McCullough and Mintz (1992) reinforced the importance of reflective opportunities.

> Without reflection, preservice student teachers and teachers tend to focus upon the technical aspects of teaching. These technical concerns can hinder a broader perspective of teaching and learning. Unresolved concerns may also impede the professional development of teachers by not allowing students to move beyond the technical level. (p.66)

Pianta and Button (1997; as cited in Pianta, 1999) more specifically detailed how teachers enthusiastically share their relationships with their students through the use of narratives:

> It is interesting that allowing adults (teachers or parents) to freely voice their experiences of relationships with children – in other words, to allow them to reveal or to narrate their representational model of the relationship – is an opportunity they welcome and approach enthusiastically. (p. 126)

> My point here is that relationships with children are a very relevant and salient feature of teachers' experiences, in and out of the classroom. Allowed the opportunity to examine, reveal, and discuss these experiences, teachers will engage. These experiences are often critical determinants of

> teachers' own feelings about their worth in the classroom (and their efficacy) as well as influences on their behavior toward the child. (p. 127)

Different researchers have endorsed the value of reflections gathered through group conversations. Rust (1999), for instance, discussed how conversations, stories, and narratives allow us to understand the complex work of learning to teach. Wilson and Cameron (1996) stated that beginning teachers *need* chances to talk about their experiences and the issues that they are facing, but this must occur during the experience and not before or after. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) considered humans "story telling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (p. 2); thus, by situating the individual's narrative within the group narrative, the researcher is studying the ways that humans experience the world. Inevitably, it is the open-ended nature of informal group conversations that allows the data gathered to be novel and often unanticipated by the researcher. Vygotsky (as cited in Daniels, 2005), in his discussion of the *Zone of Proximal Development*, stipulated the necessity of a reflective group context to help an individual learn from, and ultimately make sense of, his or her own experiences. In an analysis of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, Hoel (1997) stated, "Changing roles in a group from expert to student in a group (based on experience) forces the student to reorganize their knowledge, and express themselves in ways that their audience will comprehend - all of this means learning" (p. 7).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) emphasized that power parity between the researcher and participants were a key to the success of narrative. Group meetings in which the participants and researcher are free to speak to any issue and offer insights into the topic is certainly reflective of this because they include many voices other than those of the researcher and a single participant.

The group meetings did not begin with some proclamation of commencement or formal stipulation of topic; they were very informal throughout. All participants in the research as well as I, the researcher, understood that the focus was on student teacher relationship experiences. Nonetheless, at times it was necessary to orient the group by setting the tone or topic to be used as a focal point; otherwise, the meeting conversations would be nothing more than random statements with hit-or-miss significance to student teacher relationships. At times I prompted the group for any new experiences or insights

into student teacher relationships since the last meeting. Alternatively, volunteers read small excerpts from their journals. I told a personal story from my own student teacher relationship experiences, I prompted a participant to comment on something that I observed while watching them teach, and so forth. Fortunately, it was rarely necessary to direct the group because they attended the meetings already armed with insights into the student teacher relationship experiences that they wanted to share with and get feedback on from the group.

Despite many researchers' valuing group meetings (or what is sometimes referred to by other researchers as *group interviews*), and even more valuing narrative-based methodologies, problems arose that I had to address. In citing Welzel and Roth (1998), Aikenhead (2006) questioned the assumption that interviews can accurately capture what participants think and feel on a topic and offered three arguments against their use to the exclusion of other supplementary data collection methods:

> First, interviews themselves are contrived because they are not situated in the context of action. Second, students' humanistic concepts are not highly stable form context to context. Third, ambiguity can plague interviews too. Thus, to understand what students have learned, researchers need to listen to student conversations, note the actions of students as they engage in a meaningful task, and interview them about that specific task. (p. 89)

In this research, issues such as the frequency of meeting times, the coordination of schedules, the depth of reflection possible in a group meeting environment, the lack of actual classroom context for the group, and the specificity of individual reflections made it difficult to compare what I learned from other studies or even from previous reflections over the length of this longitudinal study. Nonetheless, the participants reported that the group meeting data collection method was the most powerful and valued component of this research process. During the meetings they were able to share their experiences and not only receive verbal support from the group, but also recognize by listening to the other participants that they were not alone in their concerns and experiences. They gained a great deal of comfort from becoming aware that they shared tribulations, and in many cases they seemed to learn from the experiences and wisdom of the other participants. As Aikenhead (2006) suggested, additional data collection methods are necessary to increase

the richness of this research, but the participants identified this component as the most beneficial.

Journal

This research was driven by the relationship between myself as the researcher and the participants, as well as the participants with each other. Aspects such as trust, sharing, and value for the topic and process feature heavily in the benefits that they may have gained. Ideally, a participant would have been given the capacity to meet with the researcher or his or her peers when an experience or issue that he or she wished to discuss arose; after all, student teacher relationship experiences do not follow a schedule. Of course, this could not happen because it was not possible for me to be present in the day-to-day experiences of 13 different people. Additionally, even when we did meet, I anticipated that a group-meeting format would sometimes be a difficult forum for some individuals to share their real concerns. Toward this end, I asked the participants to maintain a journal that they would share with me alone and that I would collect at the end of each semester (both preservice and inservice). My focus when I reviewed the journals was the student teacher relationship, but I encouraged the participants to write about what concerned them, what they wanted to remember, or even what they wanted to celebrate. This made many peripheral issues other than the student teacher relationship evident in the journals, but often these helped to enrich the context of the participants' experiences. Personally, I find that the process of writing my concerns is an effective vehicle for promoting reflection and resolution, and although journaling was a requirement of this research and a part of their student teaching practica, many of the participants mentioned that they valued the journaling process.

Geelan (2003), referring to Clandinin and Connelly (1996), explained that teachers, for the most part, work with their students in safe environments, free from the scrutiny and judgment of anyone other than their students. Furthermore, when they discuss these experiences or "secret lives", they more often do so with other teachers or, at least, in contexts removed from the class; thus teachers can tell "cover stories" and portray themselves as experts. Beginning teachers are scrutinized much more than the average teacher (by mentors, university representatives, evaluating administrators, etc.),

but even so, I was concerned that the participants would also promote themselves as experts at the expense of conveying experiences that are important to this research, but which in their opinion might create an unfavorable perception of them. With concern for these cover stories, I continually reassured them that only I would read anything that they wrote in their journals and that the university's ethics requirements (as well as my own) prevented me from referring to their identity, in the hope that I would increase the likelihood of the participants' sharing their genuine experiences. In the end, the journals were collections of anecdotal, professional, personal, and at times, emotional reflections; however, it would be naïve to believe that all of the participants related the 'cold, hard truth,' regardless of how it might make them appear.

Three concerns arose over the course of the research regarding the journals. First, even though I emphasized to the participants that I would be the only one reading their journals, keeping a journal was also a program requirement of their preservice teaching. As a result, most of the participants kept a single journal that they could submit to both me and the field supervisor from the University. Unless they kept two sets of books (which some did), during the participants' preservice program both I (the researcher) and the university's representative read the journals. Additionally, some mentor teachers had pressured the participants to allow them to read their journals as well. The result was that either the participants kept two sets of books, one for the research and one for the "official eyes," or they altered what they wrote to avoid offending the people who read their journals, which thus altered the genuineness of the related experiences. This may have also have altered some of the participants' reflections at times, but with 13 participants journaling in three different semesters and discussing their issues during school visits and group meetings, an abundance of experiences contributed to the research.

Second, many of the participants stated that they found the journaling process onerous during an already hectic period of their teaching careers—the *survival stage* as Darling-Hammond (2000) called it. This was evident in a gradual decline in the amount that the participants wrote in their journals with each successive semester of this longitudinal study, and a noticeable decline when it stopped being a formal requirement for them; that is, when they completed their education degree and became inservice

teachers. As one participant noted, "I don't have enough time to write, and I am just too damn tired anyway." Once again, a robust research design that included 13 participants and more than just journaling as a data source helped to overcome this decline in the volume of the entries. I also found that, although the amount that the participants wrote as inservice teachers decreased, the experiences that prompted them to write were typically more poignant for them and usually directly related to what they considered a 'relationship moment.'

Last, I found that the participants did not know *how* to journal when the study began. They repeatedly asked during the group meetings what I wanted them to write about. They required repeated reassurance that what was important to them during their day was what they should discuss in their journals, but that if it was helpful, they should basically think of their written issues in three stages: First, *what* is the issue/experience that has them motivated enough to write about it? Second, *why* do they think it was powerful enough for them to write about it? Last, is a resolution required for this issue/ experience, and if so, what would that be? Goodland (1990) discussed a similar finding that it is expecting a great deal of prospective teachers to ask them to become both reflective students and practitioners in a relatively short teacher education program.

In hindsight, as I review the journaling requirement of the research, despite the above-mentioned issues, I consider it a huge success. The participants' journals were a powerful and plentiful source of their student teacher relationship experiences, related in their own words in the moment in which they happened (relatively speaking). The journals also contributed the most data to the research and were therefore an essential component.

Classroom observations

Journaling was a key to gathering the experiences of the participants in their own words as they happened, and the group meetings afforded them a safe forum to share, hear, learn from, and perhaps even gain comfort in their student teacher relationship experiences. But without an awareness of the specific contexts within which the conveyed experiences originated, it is difficult to construct a portrayal of the relationships that these beginning teachers were developing with their students. Thus, it was necessary to visit these

teachers as they went about their daily teaching and interaction with their students. This not only provided more specific demographic, cultural, and logistical information about the schools, areas and classes that my participants encountered, but also allowed me to observe their interactions with their students rather than only hearing of their interactions in the group meetings and/or reading them in their journals. Kesner (2000) stated that "direct classroom observations of teachers and their students are necessary to assess more specifically the social dynamics at work in the relationship between teachers and the children in their classrooms" (p. 147).

I chose to remain focused on the beginning teachers' experiences with and perspectives of their student teacher relationships rather than interviewing the participants' students or their mentor teachers while I was in the schools to observe the participants teach. However, regardless of not directly interacting with the mentors and students, the classroom observations, more than any of the other data collection method, made my presence as the researcher evident. In chapter 5 I detail my role in and influence as the researcher on this research. The following are examples of my influence during the classroom visits:

- My own experiences as a teacher and my bias toward valuing the student teacher relationship could not help but filter my perceptions as I observed the participants teach and interact with their students.
- My classroom visits were not day by day, class by class. I was limited by the difficulty of visiting 13 different participants in different schools as often as could be reasonably expected. Thus, my observations were what I have come to conceptualize as *researcher-influenced snapshots* and not necessarily indicative of the more genuine interactions and instruction that occurred day in and day out.

I was not an invisible, all-seeing, objective presence in the participants' classrooms. This quote from Rosiek (1994) indicated how complex classroom observation can be:

> Propitious interpretation of classroom incidents requires taking into account cultural factors, individual student histories and perceptions, instructional goals and student-teacher interactions, and our own emotional investment in relationships with students. (p. 22)

One might inquire about the value of observing the participants teach and interact with their students. The value of contextualization cannot be underestimated. What is missing from the other data collected in this research are the actual observations of the participants in the context that serves as the origin for their experiences and reflections. Having an awareness of the classroom, the school, and even the community was immensely helpful for me to make sense of the experiences that the participants described. I was also able to observe them interact and after the class prompt them to comment on one aspect or another from their lesson because it was immediate and still 'warm' to the impressions of both the participants and me; it had not been filtered through a reflective mechanism. Even how the school smelled, felt, and came alive helped to contextualize the experiences of the participant who taught there. Pianta (1999), for example, stressed the necessity of observing interactions between teachers and students in context if gaining an awareness of the student teacher relationship is the goal:

> Therefore, observing interactive behaviors and how they are patterned across time, situations, and contexts is a key to understanding a relationship. In particular, observers should note the degree of involvement and responsivity (Do the individuals behave toward one another and is it mutual or reciprocal?), the emotional tones exchanged verbally and nonverbally (warmth, negativity, dismissal), the spontaneity of behavior (Does the child spontaneously approach the adult?), physical proximity (How do the individuals organize themselves physically in relation to one another?), and care-giving (In situations of need on the part of the child, is this expressed and responded to and how?). These are just some of the interactive exchanges that can be observed between adults and children that are important as indicators of the quality of this dyadic system. (p. 76)

I was able to observe all but two of my participants teach and interact with their students in each of their successive semesters. I did not observe those two participants that semester because the school divisions within which they were teaching did not grant me access. Observing the schools, classes, students, and mentors that the participants described in their journals and in the group meetings helped me to make sense of their reflections. Additionally, it promoted for the participants a sense that I was on the 'inside' and that I knew what they were talking about. Beyond the contextual awareness it afforded me, it also helped the participants trust that I knew something of which they were speaking.

Questionnaire on teacher interaction

At the beginning of this research process I wanted to find a way to have the student teacher relationship experiences of the 13 participants applicable to contexts outside of this study. It was from this orientation that I decided to include the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI). By employing a tool that had been used and validated by other researchers to measure student teacher relationships, I could connect the results of the surveys from my participants to the results reported by other researchers – thus generalizing my results to broader contexts. I recognize now that this was not necessary. By presenting the experiences of the participants, contrasting them with other research and drawing conclusions, I am already providing a vehicle for the followers of this research to connect these findings to their own contexts. The QTI did have something to offer. It provided a characterization of the participants' student teacher interactions at different points in their progression as teachers. The surveys provided 'snapshots' of the participants' student teacher relationships and because they were completed each semester, how they perceived these interactions changed with a gain in experience. However, in retrospect, the experiential basis at the core of this qualitative, longitudinal research stands on its own, without the aid of the intended triangulating value of the QTI. Thus, there is a brief discussion of the QTI and its results in Appendix A, but the results were not used in the creation of the categories in chapter 5 or the conclusions in chapter 6.

Ethical considerations

My first contact with the participants was as their curriculum and instruction instructor at the University – a requirement of their preservice education programs. I was motivated to continue to work with the beginning teachers, and to build on the relationships we had begun as a function of interacting over the length of the eight week course. I was aware, however, that adequate attention needed to be paid to ensure that there was no conflict of interest for my participants, given that I was originally their instructor. Care was taken not to mention my research while the participants were my students, and to ensure that they were only approached to participate in my research after all components of my

course were completed, evaluated and a final mark calculated and submitted. No participants were recruited until they were no longer my students, so they did not feel pressured to participate. Participants were encouraged to participate for the entire study, were free to opt out at any time, and in the end, none chose to do so.

Ethics approval was applied for and granted by the Secondary Education Research Ethics Board in the spring of 2005. Approval was also granted for me, except in two instances, to observe the participants teach by the school divisions the participants were placed in (or hired in) over the length of the research. This school access provided me as the researcher with an opportunity to observe each participant teaching. There was no formal interviewing or contact with the various students or mentor teachers of my participants in the schools, beyond me being an observer in the back of the classrooms. As a part of the ethics agreement any data that contain actual names of the participants, the schools or communities involved will only be seen by myself and my supervisor, and will be replaced by pseudonyms in any document to be viewed by anyone other than us. Additionally, the participants were informed that the data will only be used to complete my doctoral dissertation and possibly for publication and presentation at academic activities. The data collected will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet and then destroyed.

In chapter 3 I have attempted to explain the methods I have chosen to collect the data as well as the basis for those choices. In chapter 4 I discuss the analysis framework for the data collected using the methods described in chapter 3. It includes a description of how the large amount of data collected in this longitudinal study was 'filtered' for the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants - the 'primary' data analysis; how categories were formed from this data - the 'secondary' data analysis; and, how significance was attributed to each category – the 'tertiary' analysis.

This is our interpretation of our participants' interpretation of what is significant in their world

Marty Simon and Ron Tzur

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Sigh…, will you look at this mountain of data on my desk. Hours and hours of transcripts from our group meetings, three semesters of journals from my 13 participants, and volumes of my notes from the classroom visits I made over the last two years. This is going to take a while. I need to make sure I retain a clear idea of the means I am using to sort through all of this, but the time has come to figure out what is relevant and significant in all of this.

I feel almost guilty as I begin. What arrogance for me to visit and revisit the worlds of these beginning teachers and to suppose I have an insight others wouldn't have! I know that if this stack was handed to any other academic they would likely focus on a different set of quotes or instances. But, I have done my homework and have researched a lot of literature on student teacher relationships. As I now begin to review the data it is almost as though some of the moments from the last two years scream "This is significant! Say something about me!" I don't have to have the same eyes as others, but that is okay. I just need to make sure that the eyes I am using remain consistent and apparent to the people who read this; that is, that they can follow my analysis and determine why I have come to the conclusions that I have.

I intended the majority of the data collected in this study to be qualitative. The literature suggested that there is value in gaining some awareness of the aspects of the student teacher relationships beginning teachers relate by discussing and reflecting upon their teaching experiences. However, since the participants were the direct source for much of the data (e.g., journal entries and group meeting conversations), the data relevant to the student teacher relationship inevitably lie imbedded within a jungle of emotional commentary, thoughts on other aspects of their experiences other than the student teacher relationship, and also value judgments evaluating the 'good' and 'bad' moments. It became necessary to apply an analysis framework that allowed me to remain focused on the student teacher relationship and to present what I learned in a manner that suggested significance and relevance. A collection of seemingly random insights with no analytic structure or purpose is of little value. Not everything that emerged in this research was equally represented, nor had equal value to the participants (or seemingly, the academy) and thus representation of its relative significance needed to be explained by the data analysis. My conceptualization of this analysis framework follows and is summarized in

Figure 1 below. A detailed description of each component of the data analysis follows the figure.

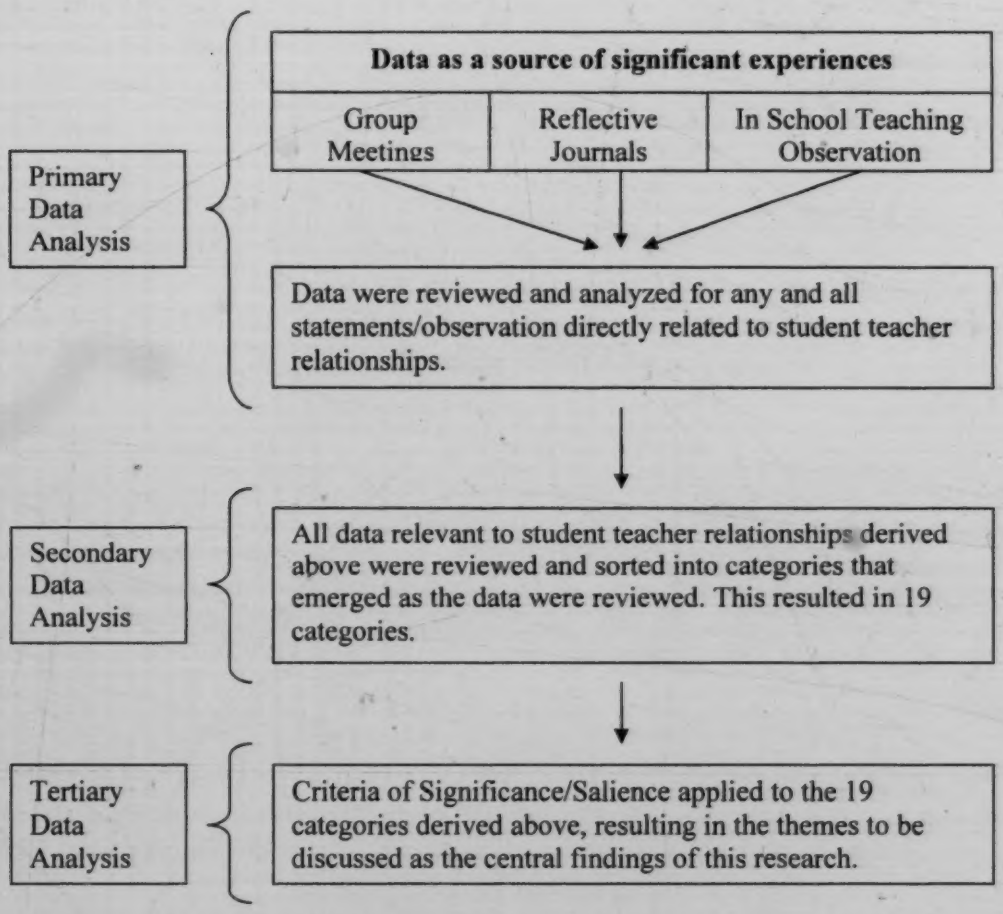
Data as a source of significant experiences
Group Meetings
Reflective Journals
In School Teaching Observation
Primary Data Analysis
Data were reviewed and analyzed for any and all statements/observation directly related to student teacher relationships.
Secondary Data Analysis
All data relevant to student teacher relationships derived above were reviewed and sorted into categories that emerged as the data were reviewed. This resulted in 19 categories.
Tertiary Data Analysis
Criteria of Significance/Salience applied to the 19 categories derived above, resulting in the themes to be discussed as the central findings of this research.

Figure 1: Data analysis model

The reason each data collection device was chosen was discussed in chapter 3. It was my intention to increase the "richness" (Guba & Lincoln, 1992) of the data by seeking different sites and methods for collecting the data that would come at the student teacher relationship phenomenon from different methodological angles. Guba and Lincoln (1992) discuss this as 'data triangulation' and discuss it as a mechanism to increase the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data. During the data analysis, however, it became apparent that the different methods chosen resulted in an unanticipated 'skewing' of the data each method collected (even though in hindsight, this result is not surprising). For

example, the participants' reflective journals offered some insight on the participants' intentions for and perceptions of a situation – which at times contradicted my observations of their actions during a classroom visit. This suggests that the participants may have been guilty of selective 'seeing' which contradicted their actions. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) discuss this as part of the temporal quality that narrative research elicits:

> Story telling and autobiography, for instance, tend to be located in the past; picturing and interviewing tend to be located in the present; and letter writing, journals, and participant observation tend to be located in the future. From the point of view of the narrative writer, then, different kinds of data tend to strengthen these different temporal locales. (p.9)

Whether these differences in the data favored by each method was temporal, as Connelly and Clandinin suggest, or being due to when, who and how each method was completed – the different methods did favor slightly different aspects of the student teacher relationship experience. This was not to the exclusion of common findings among the different methods, but a pattern did emerge. As is seen later when I discuss the criteria of significance, commonalities in data that emerged from different data collection strategies is actually one means I used to attribute more significance to one data category over another.

The group meetings were particularly strong at evoking resonant proclamations of support or denial for the issue being discussed and often moments of revelations as well. However, this had a tendency to mask the originator of the insight as well as funneling the meeting toward a particular topic theme, for better or for worse. Thus the emphases that tended to come out of the group meetings were by their nature already distillations of social negotiation. In a sense they were being filtered by the reactions and body language of the participants. Additionally the particular make-up of the group (which participants were in attendance at any particular meeting) had a tendency to nudge the topics toward the concerns of the participants willing to hold their own in the social milieu the groups became. Interestingly these patterns of social engagement became evident to the group as well, and eventually there began a form of self-policing that had participants prompting other, quieter, members for their insights on the topic at hand. Incidentally, it was this aspect of the research that the participants confided to me was the aspect they most valued. They began to need the group meetings as a means to unpack their anxiety and to

sound out what they were thinking and what worried them. They found support and comfort in being able to talk about their experiences and, even now that the data collection is finished, continue to connect with each other and me. We became part of each others survival network.

The classroom observations could be characterized as a description of the actions taken by the participants and outcomes that resulted. As an observer in the back of the room, I was not privy to the reasons for what was being done, or the personal reactions these interactions may have created beyond some minor interpretation of the body language being represented. The insights here are rooted in the pragmatics and messiness of the classroom; in the actual student teacher interactions, and in the results of these interactions. The classroom was the only data collection venue that afforded me, the researcher, some awareness of the relationship in action – I got to see both the teacher *and* the students contribute to the student teacher relationship. Additionally, this classroom observation data source provided the context for the reflections I received from other data sources. This, also, was the data collection method in which I was the most evident. Beyond the reaction of the students (and the participant) to my presence in their class, the data collected in this venue was wholly a product of what *I* was seeing and interpreting. Right from its origin, these data were a product of my own experiences as a classroom teacher and what meaning I learned to attribute to what I was observing.

The reflective journals were the source for the majority of the insights proffered by the participants on student teacher relationships. As a result they make up the largest part of the data pool and are represented most heavily in the insights drawn from the data. In general they represented a type of data that was much more personal and reflected the motivations and emotional reactions that were not as evident in the other two forms of data collection. This data collection method was particularly valuable since it was the only venue for the participants to speak directly as they intended without the filter of the group or my perceptions to mask their intent (even though some stated they felt some pressure to edit their reflections, knowing that the University Facilitator and potentially their mentor might read their journals). Additional benefits of the journals were:

- the immediacy with which they were written – they are relatively immediate reactions to the moments that created the insight (the

participant did not have to wait for the next meeting or classroom visit to 'get it out');

- the insights the participants wrote about tended to be more 'genuine' than those that were filtered by the classroom dynamic or reactions of the group;
- the ability to write exactly what one is trying to say – not subject to immediacy and fallibility of conversation (as the cliché goes, "I always think of what I wanted to say after the conversation was over").

It is worth noting that this also was the data collection device least liked by the participants. In an already busy day, they were asked to add journaling to their list of things to do – most described it as "*having* to do my journal", as opposed to some derivative of *wanting* to. The best evidence for the reluctance of the participants is that when the obligation to keep a reflective journal as a part of the universities practicum program ended, most of the participants dramatically reduced their journal writing, and all ceased their writing when the research was completed. Goodland (1990) observed a similar pattern of declining numbers of reflections from his participants and suggested that to expect prospective teachers to become both reflective students and reflective practitioners in the midst of surviving their first few years of teaching may be unreasonable.

Primary data analysis

Data from this study exists in many forms. First, I have journals from my participants' preservice practicum semesters (Introductory and Advanced Placement Terms – IPT and APT), as well as journals from their first semester as inservice teachers. Not all of the participants completed all three of these semesters during the research period delineated, but my participant group is large enough that I have an abundance of reflections from all three of the semesters studied. At the end of each semester of data collection I read each participant's journal and noted the selections with relevance to student teacher relationships as well as what I thought was significant about that selection. At the end of

the data collection period I returned to each journal and added the quotes and personal insights that had not occurred to me when reviewing the first time and were likely a product of a greater awareness of student teacher relationships derived by following the students longitudinally as well as from the literature I have read since beginning this study. These quotes and insights were saved digitally and labeled for the participant and the semester in which they were collected (IPT, APT or inservice).

Second, I observed each participant during each of their teaching semesters. During the school visit I followed them through a portion of their day, observed them teach different classes and then met with them for a period after observing them teach. From these visits I made extensive observation notes and made a record of any insights offered by the participants during our post-class conversations at that time. My priority was also to speak with the mentor (if applicable) and to note as much of the school context as I could through observation. I returned to these notes at the end of the data collection phase and relevant data informing student teacher relationships was noted and saved digitally.

Third, I met with the participants as a group during each of their teaching semesters. In their IPT semester (the semester in which the research began and that all of the participants shared), we met once per week casually, usually at my home, and discussed what was of most concern to them regarding their teaching and the relationships they had with their students. It was not uncommon for the students to be originators of the topics but sometimes they need to be prompted with a 'theme of the day' which centered on student teacher relationships and was derived from insights I gained from one of the three data collection methods. In the second semester approximately half of the students were completing their APT, and we met as a group once every two weeks. In the third semester of the data collection, there were two groups; three students who were doing their APT (meeting every two weeks), and five participants that were hired as new teachers, who met with me once per month. These meetings were recorded unobtrusively and these recording were later professionally transcribed. Additionally, during the meetings I kept notes which I later used as focal points to return to the transcripts seeking data relevant to student teacher relationships. Once again the selected student teacher relationship data were saved digitally.

The result of the data collection period was a collection of quotes and insights from the participants as well as from me, relevant to student teacher relationships, derived from each of the three data collection methods, and traceable to each participant, the method and the semester in which it originated.

Secondary data analysis

Up until this point, no categories or labels were used to orient my observations beyond "is it related to student teacher relationships?" Thus, in the secondary data analysis, I sought to categorize the data more specifically than "related to student teacher relationships". As Eisner (1998) describes, "the creation of patterns derived from observation as a basis for explaining and predicting is both the boon and bane of observation. Knowing what to look for makes the search more efficient. At the same time, knowing what to look for can make us less likely to see the things that are not part of our expectations" (p. 98). I did not want to 'force' the data down a preexisting framework of importance that was more attributable to me than the participants. I wanted the participants' experiences to be the source for the data categories that emerged. Thus, at this stage I returned to all the data that had been grouped and saved as relationship related, and sought categories into which the data could be divided. Beginning with the school visit data I asked myself "what issue/point/topic is this quote or insight actually speaking to" and saved it under a category labeled as such. Some examples of the categorization labels are: 'time' or 'nature of the school/community'. I returned to each aspect of the data and repeated the process and, if it fit within an existing category, I pasted it there. However, if it did not fit the existing categories, I created a new category that was a better description of that data. Subsequently, I repeated this process for the relationship data from the group meetings and journals. What resulted were 19 different categories, one of which each of the specific quotes/insights could be used as evidence for, emerging in an order reflective of which data source I analyzed first, but not necessarily being reflective of their relative overall impact on the participants. No value was given to any of the categories; this was a grouping technique – nothing more. It bears mentioning that some of the data were not categorically distinct at times; some of the data

could have been included under more than one of the categories established. However, for the sake of the analysis the data needed to be grouped and thus I asked myself which category 'best' described that specific data and grouped it there. See Table 1 below for a list of the 19 categories that emerged.

Table 1
Data categories

Time
The nature of community and school
What the student teacher relationship is for the participants
Mentors influence on the relationships of beginning teachers
The interdependence of relationships, instruction and classroom management
The legitimacy of beginning teachers
Content competence and the student teacher relationship
Influence of personal qualities
Relationships mediate teacher and student limits
Finding the relationship amidst a technical inclination toward teaching
Motivation for student teacher relationships
Professional conduct and the student teacher relationship
Exhaustion
Peer/Socialization pressure
Student teacher relationships influence beginning teacher efficacy
Pragmatics dominates actions and reasons
Maintaining the teacher image
University preservice education programs influence on the student teacher relationship
Where the student teacher relationship happens

This technique of using the data as the source for the categorizations that ultimately the data becomes grouped under is borrowed from the well-documented approach of 'coding' used with grounded theory methodologies. Glaser (2002) and Creswell (2002) discuss 'emerging' grounded theory data analysis designs which utilize categories, but choose to have the research originate the categories within which they are eventually grouped, in contrast with the more regimented analysis approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998) in which the data is fit into preconceived categories. My approach also seeks a form of 'saturation', as described by these grounded theory proponents, by having

no new categories emerge from the data after repeated returns to it. The data being the source for, and ultimately grouped by, the categories suggested that those chosen represented the entirety of the data. However, this is not a grounded theory study – I am not seeking a central explanatory 'core category' which is intended to become the basis for a thesis that explains the phenomenon being studied. This study is very deliberately intended to offer insights on the experience of the student teacher relationship for beginning teachers – and despite extensive discussion of the insights drawn from the data – I am not seeking to unite them under a common thesis or explanatory framework.

Tertiary data analysis

An assumption of this study is that the experiences associated with student teacher relationships are significant to beginning and inservice teachers. Over the course of the two year data collection process, I have listened to, collected, selected and recorded many stories and experiences from the participants. After conducting a primary and secondary data analysis, 19 categories resulted which describe and group the data. However, the presentation and discussion of the 19 categories listed in Table 1 with no attempt to sort or attribute significance to them is not doing the data, the participants or this study justice. Even though all of the categories originated with the data, they are not equal in their representation by the participants or in their impact on them. Some of the key categories were voiced by almost all of the participants and were evident in almost all aspects of their experiences, whereas others were more situation or participant specific. Initially, my intent was to apply criteria to act as justification for removal of some of the least prominent categories, but upon reflection of my sample size, decided that if the category emerged with only a single person from my 13 participants, it could have meaning to other beginning teachers who may have shared or could share a similar experience and thus bears a brief discussion. At this point it was necessary to establish what criteria of significance I used and why; to establish how I sorted and prioritized the categories and thus the data.

The first criterion of significance, **group resonance**, is based on the reaction of the participants to an experience. This criterion emerges in one of two forms; the participant

described and reflected upon an issue in their journal or at the group meeting that had also been independently reflected upon by other members of the group; or, an issue described by one of the participants at one of our group meetings provoked a resonant reaction within the other members of the group, as evidenced by the verbal and non-verbal reactions of the group to the story. For example, the majority of the participants described in their journals how the atmosphere within the school had a large impact on their relationship with their students, and thus qualifies as an example of group resonance. Similarly, the group as a whole reacted quite strongly to a discussion during one of our group meetings on whether they actually are treated as teachers in their schools while student teaching – a topic directly tied to teacher legitimacy for them. Even though this did not occur to many of the participants before the meeting, that is, there was no mention of this notion in their journals or classroom visits, it resonated with them in such a way as to provoke a strong reaction from them, and thus qualified as a form of group resonance. In Table 2, that follows, group resonance is represented by the 'Percentage of Participants' column – as it indicates the number of participants (divided by the total) that had at least two different instances in which they discussed something attributable to that category. I chose a minimum of two to remove the incidentals: If a participant returned to a category more than once, this suggested more than just a passing thought.

The second criterion of significance, **device resonance**, is based on the observation that the different data collection devices, despite favoring some forms of data over others, such as actions versus motivations, continued as the source for data that fell under common categories. An example of device resonance is how classroom observations, group meetings and the reflective journals all indicated that how the participants 'see' or approach student teacher relationships has a large influence on the relationships that eventually emerged (not surprisingly). Yet, the category 'Peer/Socialization pressure' was not represented at all in classroom visits, even though it did emerge briefly during the group meetings and in the journals. Thus, 'how the students see student teacher relationships' is more significant than 'peer/socialization' pressure. In Table 2, that follows, device resonance is represented by the 'Data Breakdown' column,

as it indicates the number of instances in which the participants offered insights through each of the different data collection venues.

The last criterion of significance, **individual resonance**, is based on the relative salience of the participants' described relationship experiences to that participant. If a participant continued to focus on a single aspect of their experiences over and over – that aspect is taken to be more important than other aspects to that person. For example, if Bill returns again and again through journaling and conversation to the issue of not trusting his students, and this lack of trust possibly stems from a betrayal he experienced early in his IPT practicum, then that betrayal would be data important to prioritize since it had such a profound affect on his relationships with students. If a participant presents an experience as a 'critical incident' in that teacher's experience of relationships, its inclusion in the study would be given a higher priority. In Table 2, that follows, individual resonance is represented by the 'Feature People' column, as it identifies which individuals repeatedly returned to that category of insights. Given the total number of insights originating with each participant and the group, five or more separate instances in which they discuss an experience attributable to that category seemed a reasonable standard to demonstrate a focus on that category. Remember, the names written into this column are pseudonyms, not the actual names of the participants.

These three forms of resonance are themselves not of equal importance. Group resonance is given the highest priority since it represents the relative value of the category to all of the participants regardless of data collection method or experience level. Device resonance is next in importance due to the unique triangulating value that having a category emerge from different data collection devices represents. It does not necessarily represent all of the participants, but significance is suggested when an issue emerged during a classroom observation and in a personal reflective journal or in the group meeting. Individual resonance is the least significant criterion since it has the potential to be the source for the most anomalous data – despite being a wonderful source of in depth discussion of the insight and why it may be relevant to a beginning teacher. Thus I have taken the 19 categories and arranged them hierarchically, with the most evident category being listed first, and the least evident listed last. This ordering is somewhat artificial, since the data presence of some of the first 12 categories is

comparable and furthermore, each of the 12 categories is discussed in detail in chapter 5. As can be seen in Table 2, however, the differences between the first 12 categories and the last seven are more distinct. Thus the first 12 categories are fully discussed in chapter 5 and the last seven are presented in an abbreviated or partial discussion toward the end of chapter 5.

In summary, the criteria of significance applied to the 19 categories are:

- **Group Resonance (GR)** - Which experiences were shared and described by the participants, or provoked the most resonant reaction in the group?
- **Device Resonance (DR)** - Which experiences emerged in all of the data collection methods?
- **Individual Resonance (IR)** - Which experiences were returned to over and over again by a single participant?

As a data analysis tool, applying the criteria of significance to the categories was helpful to illustrate which categories were the most salient to the participants and thus, also the most salient to this study. This did not suggest that the rank of the categories is rigid – even the label attached to each category was coined by me from what I saw in the data, but it is indicative of the amount of focus the participants directed toward each category. A summary of the result of applying these criteria can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Data categories after analysis

Category Description	Percentage of Participants (GR)	Data Breakdown (DR) C=Class Visit M=Meeting J=Journal	Feature People (IR)
What the student teacher relationship is for the participants	85	6C/7M/52J	Abe 12; Marie 7; Ben 6; Steven 5; Jim 6; Doug 5; Christine 5
Influence of personal qualities	85	11C/1M/42J	Christine 11; Marie 11; Steven 6
The nature of the community and school	77	13C/2M/31J	Dan 5; Marie 5; Phil 9
The legitimacy of beginning teachers	69	13C/7M/30J	Christine 6; Phil 7; Marie 5
Student teacher relationships influence beginning teacher efficacy	69	0C/6M/35J	Marie 6; Kelly 5; Phil 5
Content competence and the student teacher relationship	62	11C/1M/24J	Abe 8; Phil 6; Marie 5
Mentors influence on the relationships of beginning teachers	62	10C/2M/25J	Abe 5; Kelly 6
The interdependence of relationships, instruction and classroom management	54	7C/1M/31J	Abe 9; Christine 5; Marie 7
Motivation for student teacher relationships	54	6C/2M/22J	Emily 6; Steven 6
Relationships mediate teacher and student limits	54	8C/1M/18J	Steven 5
Time	54	5C/3M/19J	Marie 5; Abe 5
Finding the relationship amidst a technical inclination toward teaching	54	6C/1M/19J	Phil 7
Exhaustion	46	5C/2M/11J	None
Peer/Socialization pressure	38	0C/3M/19J	Phil 6
Pragmatics dominates actions and reasons	23	0C/4M/18J	None
Maintaining the teacher image	38	0C/0M/14J	None
Professional conduct and the student teacher relationship	15	3C/2M/5J	None
Where does the student teacher relationship happen?	23	0C/0M/11J	None
University preservice education programs influence on the student teacher relationship	8	0C/0M/8J	None

In chapter 5, I expanded upon each of the data categories above, illustrating each with specific data drawn from the study as well as contextualizing it within the literature related to the ideas presented. Additionally, I discussed aspects of the study that emerged in the data but defied being categorized as participant driven insights on student teacher relationships. This included evidence of how the student teacher relationships evolved for the participants as they gained teaching experience, and evidence of my role and presence in this research.

Stories, including those told by teachers, are constructions that give meaning to events and convey a particular sense of experience. They are not videotapes of either reality, thought, or motivation. Thus, we cannot escape the problems of veracity and fallibility in our work by making special claims for teachers' constructions of their practice. From this perspective, teachers' stories are stories told.

(Carter, 1993, p.8)

Chapter 5: Discussion of Central Ideas

Introduction

In this chapter I 'explode' the categories described in chapter 4, to the data collected from the participants' student teacher relationship experiences. These categories are not equally represented in the data. Even though 21 categories emerged from the data, I have chosen to present these categories in three sections. The first section encompasses the categories that were the most prevalent in the data and typically well represented in all three of the data collection methods; that is, in classroom observations, the group meetings and in the participants' journals. The first section of this chapter includes a discussion of each of the first 12 categories.

The seven categories, which I have labeled as "Partial Discussion Categories", also emerged from the data, but not to the same extent as the categories discussed in the first section and thus I have chosen to summarize them in a table format and to include them as Appendix D. This allowed me to offer a brief discussion of them, with representative quotes drawn from the data, while acknowledging they did not have as much presence as the first 12 categories. The last two categories I have labeled as "meta" categories. That is, they speak to findings drawn from, and applicable to the research program as a whole. This contrasts with the first 19 categories which address the connection between the student teacher relationship and a specific aspect of teaching. Please see Table 3 for a quick summary of the sections and which categories they encompass.

Table 3

Summary of data category discussion groupings

Section	Categories Included
Full Discussion	• What the student teacher relationship is for the participants • Influence of personal qualities • The nature of the community and school • The legitimacy of beginning teachers • Student teacher relationships influence beginning teacher efficacy • Content competence and the student teacher relationship • Mentors' influence on the relationships of beginning teachers • The interdependence of relationships, instruction and classroom management • Motivation for student teacher relationships • Relationships mediate teacher and student limits • Time • Finding the relationship amidst a technical inclination toward teaching
Partial Discussion (see Appendix D)	• Exhaustion • Peer/Socialization pressure • Pragmatics dominate actions and reasons • Maintaining the teacher image • Professional conduct and the student teacher relationship • Where does the student teacher relationship happen? • University preservice education programs' influence on the student teacher relationship
Meta Discussion	• Beginning teachers and the evolution of their student teacher relationships as they gain experience • Researcher presence/influence in the research

This chapter is intended to offer a discussion of the data within the context from which it originated. I represented patterns of similarity and difference between the participants and themselves as well as the participants and the research literature on student teacher relationships. At times, I used stories to illustrate and contextualize the described experiences, since as Carter (1993) explains; story brings with it a richness and

nuance that cannot be expressed in definitions, statements of fact or abstract propositions. However, the majority of the categories are focused on presenting the experiences, often in the words of the participants themselves, and contrasting these with other experiences described by the participants or as described in the research literature. In chapter 6 the categories are drawn upon as the basis for my conclusions and recommendations regarding beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences.

Full discussion categories

5.1) What the student teacher relationship is for the participants

It's 8:15, Abe was just let into his class by his mentor five minutes ago and the kids have already started to arrive for their 8:30 Chemistry 20 class – first period of the day.

Abe is not nervous, but he is busy – so much to do before the bell rings in only 15 minutes. He has been working in the staff room, but Abe finds it difficult since there are just so many interruptions - teachers coming in and out to drop off their coats and get their morning coffee.

The class is a pretty typical science class with the walls covered in science posters and some science projects hanging from the ceiling. About 30 table-chair combinations are scattered in four roughly organized rows. There are only 22 students in Chemistry 20, but Abe doesn't really care if it is 15 or 35. It just means a bit more marking; it doesn't really change his lessons. The students continue to filter in, but Abe hardly notices. He is trying to remember everything he has planned and make sure it is at his fingertips when class begins.

Okay, the transparencies are on the table beside the overhead. I think I will leave my binder here on the corner of the desk; I should need it only when I get to those Stoich examples.

"Excuse me…. Bill, I need to get past you here into the shelf to get the data booklets."

How many students in chem again? Twenty-two I think. Better grab a few extra just in case I am wrong. I am going to make damn sure that they get it this time! I can't believe they did so poorly on the last exam. What the hell am I doing wrong? Why can't they just ask me when they are having problems? Well, this time they won't get away with it! I am going to make them do so many examples they can't help but do better on the quiz this Friday.

Maybe if they work well today and promise to do well on the quiz, I will take the first 10 minutes of class on Monday to have brownies or something. Might be a good idea if I

make some attempt to talk to them anyway; I don't want them to think that I only care about chemistry. Maybe some word games or something? I will ask Rhonda what she thinks; she seems to get along with them so well.

The bell rings, the first of three, in an attempt to warn the students to get to class and to alert the teachers that their day is about to begin. Even after two bells, many of the students are still filtering in. By the ringing of the third bell, Abe has not said a word to anyone (other than getting Bill to move to get at the data booklets). He moves to the front-center of the room next to the overhead projector, flips it on, looks to see that his first overhead is displayed and is aligned properly, turns back to the class, and begins his day with …

"Okay, class, last day we did some basic mole calculations; today we are going to be getting into stoichiometry…"

What is a student teacher relationship?

I was the science education instructor for each of my 13 participants. I taught them how to approach teaching science and some basic teaching techniques they could use. After the course with me was finished I asked anyone interested in working with me on research into student teacher relationships to attend an information meeting in which I describe the focus of the research. The result was that the 13 participants represented in this research knew from the beginning that student teacher relationships were the focus of my research, and conceivably since they agreed to participate in the research, saw enough value in this topic to volunteer for the research. Further, they must have continued to place value in the research as not one of the participants withdrew from the research process after it began despite a two year data collection period. In addition they may have also valued the relationship that was developing with me and with each other. I have prefaced this section with this background because it speaks to a rather overt orientation toward relationships that the participants were either given or had as they entered the research, and thus their interpretation of the student teacher relationship was a feature they brought with them and held throughout the research process.

As I reviewed the data it became apparent that how the participants approached the study influenced what they discussed. However, what also became apparent was how the biases, perceptions, skills/awareness and history of the participants all played a role in their student teacher relationships and also in what they considered to be a 'relationship

moment'. Flores (2003), in a study on mapping teacher change over time, also found that teachers' initial beliefs and practices were embedded in and tied to broader contexts; personal, social, and historical.

Coming to grips with what a student teacher relationship was something that arose repeatedly during data collection. The participants had some awareness of human interactions, but none had specifically experienced a student teacher relationship as a teacher. Thus there were many attempts at addressing for themselves what a 'good' and 'bad' student teacher relationship was and how they could measure their relative success on that scale. I intentionally did not try to define the student teacher relationship for them – each person was asked to define and understand it for them self. I did not want the participants to simply parrot back an understanding of student teacher relationships that mirrored my own.

None of the participants in this study had taught before their first practicum, thus their conception of what a student teacher relationship is, not surprisingly varied between them, but also varied from moment to moment during their practica as they were exposed to more teacher experiences. At one of our first group meetings the participants expressed that they had no idea of what a student teacher relationship is and how they could judge its quality and relative impact. Some of the questions raised at that point were: Is it out of class? Out of school? Warm and fuzzy? Does it include discipline or politics? Should we include the relationship with the mentor or other staff and administration? Clearly they were grappling with a definition. I empathized with them but remained clear that these were questions they needed to answer for themselves.

In her Introductory Professional Term (IPT) - her first student teaching experience, Emily wrote that her relaxed and cool demeanor around her students is evidence of a 'good relationship', but when she is being 'knowledgeable' she is a 'good teacher'. Steven discusses how his relationships are best evidenced by how well controlled his classes are. Ben expressed that his relationships were visible by how much more success he had at delivering physics content in one class as contrasted with another class. Even though these are all instances of the participants attempting to define student teacher relationships for themselves, the personal characteristics of their students seem to surprise the participants. The attitudes and abilities of their students seemed to be a

continual surprise to them. The relationship for these beginning teachers originates and is driven by them. The students' role in the relationship was not a priority for these beginners.

"Why should it matter? Would I want to be subjected to total silence while working?" This quote taken from Ben's IPT journal is indicative of many of these beginning teachers – their frame of reference remains rooted in their personal histories with teaching – essentially those of a student. For example, Doug was quite despondent about the relationship he had with his drama students – as evidenced by their interactions and the level of performance they were giving him, as he stated, "they aren't like they could be". Yet, one of the students from that drama class confided to me she felt "really connected" to Doug and was proud of her class's performance. Doug was seeing the class through the eyes of his own drama experiences and was not seeing the value of the class to his students now that he was the teacher. Another example of how the participants are using their personal experiences as students to evaluate their teaching is Marie's reflections on how her Science 7 lesson did not work out the way she hoped and intended. She noted, "they just didn't react the way I would have". These beginning teachers, in the absence of having any other way of judging the student teacher relationships (as teachers) are using what they know – their memory of the student teacher relationship as students. This perhaps is not surprising – how can you interpret a phenomenon except through your own experiences with it? What it does, is offer insight into how the participants collectively defined, described and normalized their student teacher relationships. These beginning teachers are judging themselves and their relative success with relationships through the frame of what they experienced and came to expect from relationships as students, with little awareness of how to make that happen or if it was reasonable to have those expectations.

In 1992 Kagan published a literature review that detailed some of the growth of preservice and beginning teachers. Similar to the findings in the previous paragraph, Kagan found that beginning teachers related to their experiences as teachers, by default, based on their own experiences in the classroom as students:

> Candidates come to programs of teacher education with personal beliefs about classrooms and pupils and images of themselves as teachers. For the most part, these prior beliefs and images are associated with a candidate's

> biography: his or her experiences in classrooms, relationships with teachers and other authority figures, recollections of how it felt to be a pupil in classrooms. Two particularly important elements in shaping prior beliefs/images are exemplary models of teachers and a candidate's image of self as learner. Candidates often extrapolate from their own experiences as learners, assuming that the pupils they will teach will possess aptitudes, problems, and learning styles similar to their own. (p. 154)

Seemingly, the transition for these beginning teachers from student to teacher required more than circumstance and title – they must 'see' themselves as the teacher and act according to that belief. Until that point, the judgment of their student teacher relationships seemed to more closely resemble self-evaluations than an actual appraisal of the role that both they (the teacher) and the students have in the relationship.

A 'good' relationship is…

So how did the participants describe their student teacher relationships? Even though the descriptions are highly contextual, there was a tendency expressed in the data for the relationships to be judged as either 'good' or 'bad'. It is important to state that this study was not about quantifying how 'good' and 'bad' student teacher relationships are defined. This study was about describing the experience of the student teacher relationship for my participants. It was evident in the data, however, that the participants themselves judge the value of their relationships and thus what they judged as 'good' and 'bad' bears mentioning here. What follows are specific examples of how the participants perceived or conceptualized their student teacher relationships.

In a group meeting late in their IPT semester, the participants described 'good' relationships as: open, comfortable, natural, students feel they can initiate interactions, mutually inclusive, and they promote understanding of each other. Emily adds to this definition in her IPT journal as she admires her mentor "Students seem to be at ease with telling Mr. H their problems (non-academic related). Mr. H is very supportive. This is the relationship I want to build with my students." Similarly, rapport, as observed in Steven's mentor, is a central component of what Steven values in a student teacher relationship "He [mentor] has a great rapport with the students; they all seem to respect him." Ben values the rapport he personally can build with students after teaching them a lesson. For Christine the student teacher relationship is when she is having fun and is relaxed "I had

so much fun today with my Grade 10's. I am becoming much more relaxed around them."

Humor is also a central component of the relationships the participants describe as 'good'. Christine, Taylor, Emily and Ben all indicate moments in which the humor of the situation facilitated a relationship moment they appreciated. For example, Taylor discusses how "I made them laugh a bit which felt nice – they seemed to enjoy the lecture I think." The following quote from Marie summarizes a type of baseline measure that was employed by most of the participants – if the interaction with your students makes you feel good, it is part of a 'good' relationship. "I guess I am selfish in my motives for forming student relationships; they make me feel good and make this job worthwhile for me." This foreshadows findings presented later on in this chapter in which these beginning teachers have a tendency to judge the 'feel good' moments as relationship in origin, and the 'feel bad' moments as management issues, as well as indications of how the efficacy of the teachers is strongly tied to the relationships they form with their students.

A 'bad' relationship is…

So how do the participants represent 'bad' relationships? In the same group meeting in which the participants described 'good' relationships they described 'bad' relationships as: no connection between the students and the teacher, students do not listen, students are apathetic and have no regard for others, students are resistant to instruction, students do not take the teacher seriously, students cannot be held accountable, and there is a feeling that the students are 'lost' to the teacher. I found it interesting to note that many of the aspects they specify as part of a 'good' student teacher relationship originate with the teacher and how *all* of the aspects they specify as indicative of a 'bad' relationship originate with the students. Is there a connection between how their relationships are judged and whether it is the teacher that initiates or controls the moment? As evidenced by this quote drawn from Taylor's IPT journal, power and control have a role to play in how these beginning teachers are approaching their student teacher relationships "Give in or make the kids do what I want them to? If I wanted them to do it how would I make them? So I gave in. I don't want to be a pushover

and I don't want to be a jerk." Again shadows of control emerge in these quotes from Jim in his Advanced Professional Term (APT) semester:

> I can fight them and force them to resent me, but be marginally more on task. Or, I can choose to loosen the reigns a bit continuing to cultivate the mutual respect relationships and see if it all comes out in the wash. I have chosen the second option.
>
> Students work *for* me during class and *with* me after class.

Two instances from Marie's APT journal, suggest a deeper awareness of the changing aspect of relationships – situations or moments that are 'good' or 'bad' can become something else:

> I may have been a little too friendly with a few students. I want them to respect me and to listen – they might start abusing me if they think I am their friend.
>
> I should focus on connecting with all of my students. I might be playing favorites too much.

Marie is gaining some awareness of how relationships are not so easily and dichotomously categorized as 'good' or 'bad'. Eisner (1998) discusses how teachers can suffer from 'secondary' ignorance – when one does not know that they do not know, or 'primary' ignorance – when you are aware of your own ignorance. The above quotes from Marie indicate that she is becoming aware of some of the intricacies of relationships that she was largely unaware of when she began teaching. She still does not have solutions, but now she knows enough to be motivated to find them – a move from secondary to primary ignorance.

How do the participants judge the success of their student teacher relationships?

'Good' or 'bad' - despite being used in our evaluations of our day or our actions – is contextual and is not necessarily the perception of others appraising the same situation. So what criteria are the participants using to judge the quality (and perhaps even success) of their student teacher relationships? Abe reflects "as I am sure you are getting the point,

the students like me a lot…and to be honest, I'm not even sure why. My only formulation is the fact that they acknowledge that if they are on task and behaving appropriately, I am consistently a nice person who shows a genuine interest in their daily lives." For Abe "on task and behaving properly" are the measuring sticks that he uses to judge his relationships (which he apparently subsequently rewards by being nice and showing genuine interest in their lives). For Steven, Phil, and Jim having the students feel comfortable enough to initiate interactions with them is how they judge the 'success' of their relationships:

> The students are really warming up to me. They are starting conversations with me now, versus me always going up to them. (Steven)
>
> We had really good interaction with the students today, and are further building upon positive student teacher relationships. The students were eagerly approaching us with questions and comments, and were very receptive of support we gave in class. (Phil)
>
> …attest to the relationships I am building and environment I have created that is making them comfortable approaching me and the class with all levels of questions. (Jim)

Jim adds in other elements as well, suggesting a greater awareness of the interdependent nature of relationships:

> I think that the relationship I have with my students may be the single most important aspect of my success as a teacher. I need the students to respect me, they must allow me to establish and enforce rules and procedures. However, they must also see me as someone that cares about them and for them.

For Tim, the success of his relationships lies simply, and perhaps naively, in his perception of whether the students like him: "The grade 10 class is a PAIN, but they're all really good kids. They're starting to like me."

Unfortunately for the participants, the frame of reference they used to judge their relationships did not always leave them feeling positive about them. Ben, in his first semester of inservice teaching is using the other more experienced teachers and their student teacher relationships to judge the quality of the relationships he has with his students.

> Raising money for World Vision, another teacher has half-filled her collection can in just a week, my can has barely any coins in it (can still see the bottom). I take this as a clear example of how ineffective I am in making student connections. Another example is the lack of students coming for extra help. I get maybe 1 or 2 each Wednesday at lunch and maybe 1 or 2 after class every couple of weeks. Other teachers get whole classrooms full.

An insecurity that emerged in the group meetings was that regardless of a 'good' or 'bad' label applied to their relationships, these beginners did not know if their successes and failures with their students were due to their actions/character or whether it was the situation they inherited. "I can't tell if they are behaving because they respect me, fear me, like me, or because the mentor has established the tone before I even got here" (Emily, IPT semester). This was particularly evident during their first practicum when they had no frame of reference beyond their experiences as a student. Many stated that as a result of this, the interactions they had with their students outside of class were a better indication for them of what sort of relationship they had with their students.

Other orientations to the student teacher relationship – further insights on the participants' 'lens'

Contrast the following two quotes – the first from Ben in his IPT practicum, the second from Christine in her IPT practicum.

> I turn around in the middle of the lesson trying to remember the example I planned to use at this point and see a room full of people – they are quiet, but how can you tell if they actually understand you?

> Brian is becoming more and more involved; however, I am a little concerned because his writing is not where it is to be expected. He also tends to repeat answers that other students have said even after discussing the answers with the class and determining whether or not the answers are right or wrong. Maybe he does not comprehend or maybe he is not listening. I will keep an eye on him.

Here are two beginning teachers, both teaching science and both with relatively the same amount of teaching experience. Ben would be the first to admit how he got caught up in all of the technical details of teaching and content during IPT, so much so, that when he

looks up briefly from his lessons he sees the *class* looking back at him. Christine somehow is reaching beyond her lesson and position to find the *student* amidst the class. Perhaps this is due to the size of the classes each taught, their natures or even insecurities – but it illustrates how relationships are influenced by a focus on the class as a whole versus a focus on the individuals that make up the class.

Phil is another example of a participant who struggles to find the individual in his classes. He addresses his classes almost exclusively as "you guys" and consistently reacts to the situations that develop while remaining unaware of what or who initiated the situations that develop and why. Abe is another who admitted to having a whole battery of *class* management techniques he employed during his IPT and APT semesters, but yet was hesitant to single out individuals or discuss issues with them not related to class material. Doug on the other hand is an example of a beginning teacher who made it a priority to engage the individual – discussing in his APT journal how he has stopped trying to apply ubiquitous rules to his students and has started trying to personalize responses and actions based on his perceptions of the student. This is well illustrated by Doug in the following quote:

> Randy was very defiant and refused to participate in an appropriate manner. I felt alright leaving him for the time being because it gave him a chance to correct the problem and exert some self control.

It should not be surprising that many of the participants struggled to find the individual in their classes given the steepness of their learning curves – every day they are being inundated with moments that are new to them. It is understandable that many pull away from seeking the individual since this involves a level of intensity and time that borrows from all of the other concerns in their day. The difficulties of the 'survival stage' - the first few years of a teachers' career, are well documented (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Yet, many of these same participants professed a belief that every student could and should be reached (a belief founded when they themselves were students?). This contradiction never overtly became an issue for the participants, however – perhaps, the pragmatics of their chaotic world left them with little recourse. Doing what we believe we should do and what we believe we can do are often not the same thing. Many of the participants discuss that compromise directly. For example, Ben talked often about not

liking the teacher he is *forced* to be in order to survive, but hopes that in a few years when he has time, he can bring back those humanistic aspects he has abandoned for the sake of survival.

Christine illustrates another way of 'seeing' in the following statement: "I treat students as I would treat anyone else in life. I want my students to feel safe it is ok to open up to me, so I open up to them first." Some of the participants assume that 'the rules' of human interaction apply in the class and interact with their students on that basis. A somewhat more secular version of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". These journal quotes from Jim and Tim further illustrate this orientation:

> I give my students some adult responsibilities and relax when the noise level begins to increase. I am finding this approach is helping me get a high average output from students as they genuinely feel I am there to care for and help them. They seem to be responding with a desire to learn the material. (Jim)

> My plan is to kill them with niceness…, but not be a pushover at the same time. How can they help but treat me the same in return? (Tim)

This orientation is not shared by all, as Abe illustrates by saying:

> I think a mistake a lot of first year teachers make is that they walk into a classroom of 35 junior high students and try to become friends with them. You assume if you act really nice to these students, in exchange they will provide you with the same courtesy. Perhaps that strategy might work initially in 1 out of 20 classrooms.

Clearly Abe believes that students cannot be expected to treat you the same way that you treat them. What would a relationships formed with Abe's orientation be like as compared to Jim, Christine and Tim's more humanistic orientation above?

Some of the other ways in which the participants conceptualized their students that had an influence on their student teacher relationships are:

- Students do not exist or have stories outside of class. Phil and Abe both mention "surprise" at how the students' lives influence and affect their students during class.
- "I am responsible." Ben's default position (and that of most of the participants) is to try to 'force' the students to learn by taking the responsibility for their actions upon himself. If they are not well-behaved, it is

"my fault"; if they do poorly on the exam, it is his fault; if they do not like biology, it is his fault.

- "Is my goal relationship or achievement?" Kelly expresses a concern that she doesn't know what the goal of her interactions with her students should be. Her preconception is that student teacher interactions are ultimately to potentiate student achievement, and personal interactions are more 'friendship' intended. Having a student teacher relationship discussed as being between these two extremes was difficult for her.

Summary

This category – how the participants 'see' student teacher relationships, was the most evident in the data – being well represented in the group meetings, the school visits and in the reflective journals. It was a focal point of the participants and in summary, some of the issues that emerged in this category are:

a) The participants were oriented towards relationships as evidenced by their involvement in student teacher relationship research.
b) Participants perceive their student teacher relationships (at least initially) not as teachers, but as essentially students.
c) A belief that student teacher relationships originate and are driven by the teacher.
d) 'Good' and 'Bad' relationships are value judgments that the participants themselves use when reflecting on their relationships.
e) "Is it me or the situation?" Confusion over the origin of the interactions they experience (particularly during the preservice practica).
f) Some of the participants focus on the class, others, the individual.
g) The 'rules' of human interaction they employ in their lives can be applied in the classroom as well.

What has emerged in this category is that the participants are not ubiquitous and what they bring to the table personally (as a function of their natures or past) has a large bearing on the student teacher relationships they experience. Clarridge and Berliner (1991) suggest that the lack of experience of these novices exaggerates the influence their varied backgrounds has on their ability to 'see' and react to the various relationship scenarios that develop in class – they have not learned what to look for and how to react as their more experienced colleagues may react when faced with similar circumstances. In the next category, the discussion turns to how the personal qualities of the participants influenced their student teacher relationships.

5.2) Influence of personal qualities

Rarely in the literature does one find research actively seeking causality between the personal qualities or natures of teachers and classroom behaviors, student achievement, or student teacher relationships. Perhaps that is because a teacher's nature is an aspect that teacher preparation programs and school divisions have little control over – beyond the screening capacity a hiring committee has when deciding which teacher to hire for a specific position. Or perhaps it is because personal qualities are notoriously difficult to quantify and attribute consistent significance to. Yet the personal qualities of a teacher seem to be related to the type of teacher one becomes, the environment created within one's classrooms and the teachers' capacity to be effective within the role that they have been assigned. This is made even more complex by the seemingly unlimited number of teaching situations a teacher potentially faces. Wilson and Cameron (1996) discussed how some fundamental interpersonal ability of teachers increases their effectiveness as teachers, not their management or content expertise. From my own experience, the type of teacher that I needed to be when teaching grade 2, was completely different than when teaching high school biology in a small, low income farming community, or when I was teaching academically intensive IB physics at a private international school. In my opinion it was my nature that allowed me to adapt and become what I needed to be in those diverse teaching worlds and yet I would struggle to prescribe what sort of nature that would require, even if I could somehow quantify a person's personal qualities that influence one's teaching. Interestingly, most teachers I have known (myself included) believe they have some ability to judge whether a teacher has what it takes to 'make it' within the schools in which they have experience teaching. I remember well the words of a teacher colleague, stating that he could tell within three days if the student teacher he had been assigned would make it and be successful. He was speaking to some fundamental quality within their natures, but when pushed for explanation of how he could tell, his reply was simply "you can just tell". Despite this colleague's reticence to define 'making it' or 'being successful', his comments illustrate the point that the personal qualities of a teacher are amorphous and inherently difficult to quantify, yet

apparently continue to influence the experiences of both beginning and experienced teachers. These personal qualities are also a measure that others use for judging teachers.

Personal qualities as they relate to student teacher relationships specifically are no easier to quantify. The student teacher relationship is not only influenced by the value that teachers place on the relationship relative to other classroom aspects, but also influences the ease with which the relationship is formed and maintained. Athletic students would likely have an easier time relating to and benefiting from a teacher who shares a similar orientation to athletics for instance. In this study, the personal qualities of the participants did emerge as a data analysis category that significantly influenced their student teacher relationship experiences. This connection between the student teacher relationship experiences and the participants' personal qualities was noted during classroom observations and was also identified by the participants themselves during the group meetings and in their journals as having an influence.

Not surprisingly, the relative value and impact of personal qualities on teaching in general and the student teacher relationship specifically, is contested in the literature. Mawhinney and Sagan (2007), for instance, described respect, courtesy, fairness, caring, understanding, humor, and love of children as just some of the personal qualities that increase the potential and value of the teacher to the students. They concluded that these qualities are not inherent, and that contrary to the expression that 'teachers are born, not made', they believed that these qualities can be emphasized and taught to prospective teachers. By contrast Chamber et al. (2001) quoted Getzels and Jackson (1963), Baldwin (1990), and Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) to demonstrate a varied perspective on which personal qualities are important in teachers and even if they are an important aspect at all. For example, Chambers et al. (2001) quote Getzels and Jackson (1963) stating that "personality characteristics of the teacher are the most significant variable in classroom success (p. 4)." Baldwin (1990) is quoted as stating the qualities of teachers that most influence effective teaching are "assertiveness, willingness to take risks, independence, self-confidence, creativity, warmth and being loving (p. 4)." Yet Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) are quoted as finding no consistent relationship between teacher characteristics and the behavior and learning of students, except perhaps for the teachers' sense of efficacy.

Despite the mixed message evident in the literature regarding the value of personal qualities for teachers, it was clear in my research that the participants believed their personal qualities had an influence on their student teacher relationship experiences. The paragraphs that follow will discuss some aspects of the participants' natures that affected their student teacher relationship experiences, as observed or shared, and some of the outcomes that resulted. The list of personal qualities that are discussed does not likely contain an inclusive listing of personal qualities that could affect the student relationship experiences of the participants, but they are the aspects that emerged in this research and thus will be discussed in the following section. However, I begin with a brief biographical/contextual description of one of the participants and ask; "In your opinion will she be an effective teacher, however you choose to define that, and secondarily, do you think that her student teacher relationships will be influenced by her nature?" My guess is your response will be "that depends" – an answer that seems to arise often when considering student teacher relationships.

Christine

Christine is a 22 year old, highly motivated, and hard working beginning teacher. More than any other quality, Christine radiates caring and genuine concern for those around her. She is a strong believer in the basic 'goodness' of people (particularly her students), assuming that how she treats others will be returned in kind by them to her; she is driven to reach a real level of understanding and openness between her and her students. Often she does this through sharing of her own experiences, particularly incidences which present her as having experienced trauma herself, and thus shares and understands the pain of her students. Her willingness to be vulnerable with her students is astounding and often provokes incredulous responses in the colleagues with whom she interacts. Christine wears her traumas as badges of survival and does not try to hide her personal attachment in her reactions to inappropriate behavior. For instance, she stated that her experiences of being bullied as a student have led her to have no tolerance for bullying in her class. By forcing the perpetrators of the bullying to hear her experiences with bullying (what she describes as the "victims perspective") she is attempting to aid them in understanding the impact of their actions. Honesty, confidence, personal accountability,

having high expectations and being open and 'real' are all aspects of what Christine values in herself and rewards as well as expects from her students. In her own personal journey, Christine has come to think of problems as challenges to be overcome and when she gains an awareness of crisis in the lives her students, actively involves herself in an attempt to help her students through the problem and perhaps gain some sense of self-realization and empowerment. The following quotes from Christine's journal are just a few examples of her orientation to teaching, her students and the relationship experiences that result:

> I became popular when they found out that I competed in dB [decibel] drags and was the loudest female in Western Canada. I believe that as long as I stay real with the grade 9's, and continue to share my life experiences with them, I will be able to motivate them to learn.
>
> Halfway through the week, I had an instance with John. He called Darry fat. Because I was teased tremendously in junior high, I do not tolerate this at all. I instantly pulled him out of class and got him to explain what respect and harassment is.
>
> Doug did come in and get some help yesterday after school and I truly believe that somehow I managed to motivate him to do his math. Not only did I tutor him math but also I got to chat with him a lot. I found out that he likes playing the violin. His ultimate goal is to go to university and possibly med school. I was straight up, I told him that with his current work habits, this is not possible; However, he has the choice to change.

Whatever your reaction to the relative merits of Christine's nature with regards to teaching, it seems reasonable to expect that her orientations described above will create a different relationship with her students than a teacher who, for example, becomes uncomfortable when a student begins to share an experience from their extra-curricular lives with him/her. The personal qualities and experiences we all bring with us into the classroom have an influence on the relationships that result, and what follows are some of the personal aspects of the participants that had the most influence on their student teacher relationship experiences.

In the grand scheme of things…

A question that I often ask my curriculum and instruction students just before they begin their first lesson planning assignment is to remember back to their days as a high school or junior high science student and to recollect how many of the 100's of lessons they remember specifically; how much impact on their lives did any one of those lessons have on them? I do this in an attempt to give them some perspective; to ask themselves with what do they want their students to leave their class? When the moment by moment events of a lesson are contrasted with the bigger picture of the students and teachers lives, it removes a lot of stress associated with the details of the day to day, and allows them to roll with the moments much easier. Of course we all get caught up in the moments of our lives, but some of the participants seemed to have a natural predisposition to hold an 'in the grand scheme of things' perspective that allowed them to cope with the day to day moments much easier. When these students were teaching they seemed more confident, serene and aware. Consequently this attitude influenced their students and the subsequent relationships that evolved.

In his journal, Ben frequently reminded himself to "remember the bigger picture" – almost a mantra he used to not let the details of the day weigh him down. This continual reminder to himself helped him keep his days in perspective and to not be overwhelmed by the new experiences he was having and work that he was doing. In a post lesson meeting with Phil, he discussed how he was so proud of the success of his students. What is noteworthy is that for him this meant that his students were attending class and trying to do the work. At the time Phil was teaching in a high school for coded and 'troubled' students, who had so many traumas in their lives that even attending school was noteworthy. Phil had gained an awareness of the bigger picture of his students lives and thus had adjusted his expectations accordingly. Doug is also 'big picture' in his approach to his teaching, attributing his perspective to two things: his nature of not letting things bother him because they "don't really matter in the long run"; and extensive preparation or knowing where the class is and is going. These two qualities genuinely conveyed to the students that the little hiccups from day to day were no big deal, and that Doug could get the class where they needed to go. This awareness and consideration of a larger perspective for the students and themselves created a more relaxed environment in their

classes – they did not panic when a lesson did not go exactly as planned or when a student questioned them or behaved inappropriately. In my limited observations of their classes, the students seemed to respond to this approach with acceptance and greater willingness to trust these beginning teachers – it gave them confidence that the teacher knew where they were going, could get them there and knew that sometimes life got in the way. By contrast, Abe was a teacher who stressed about every detail of his lesson and always worried if he was on pace or whether he explained a concept in the best way. Every unexpected question or moment threw his 'plan' off, was not appreciated and was reacted to in kind. Abe projected a nervous apprehension tone that the students came to judge him by and respond to; they also became nervous about his expertise and reactions. Ironically, Abe was likely more meticulously prepared and more subject competent than Ben, Phil or Doug, but his nervous tension did not convince his students of that.

Taylor, Steven and Emily achieved a similar result with a laid back manner coupled with humor and a portrayal of confidence. However, this was not due to an awareness of a bigger picture, but rather because their natures were to be laid back, relaxed and to find the humor in the moment. The day-to-day interactions were genuinely fun for them and they looked forward to the unexpected, not feared it. This quote from Taylor summarizes his approach:

> I am a little concerned since I am naturally a goofy guy. I would like to be a goofy guy or at least myself when I teach. I love to look at the reaction of the class to judge what works and what really doesn't.

This seeking of humor in a relaxed and laid back manner once again colored the interactions and thus relationship between these beginning teachers and their students. Students seemed to enjoy the classes and felt free to banter and interact with the teacher; they were not intimidated by the traditional student teacher roles. It is difficult to quantify in any way, how these humor-filled, relaxed interactions affected the students, but when observing these students, their responses to this approach suggested it was affecting them. Taylor even professed at one point that his use of humor was worrisome to him since he did not think that the students knew when to take him seriously and when not to. He was worried that if he presented material in a humorous way that the students would not believe it to be as important as material presented in a serious manner. I do not know if

this was the case, but it is safe to conclude that his relationships with his students were influenced by his humorous nature.

Caring

In Noddings (2003) book, *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*, she recommended that teaching be oriented by a more maternal, caring motivation. I do not intend to debate whether caring is the domain of a feminist perspective, but caring was a quality that influenced the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants in this research. Earlier in this category, I presented a brief biography of Christine and asked that you consider whether you think that her personal qualities influenced her relationships with her students. Caring was an aspect of Christine's nature that was evident in all aspects of her person and actions as a teacher. There was more than one occasion in which she 'opened up' to her students, sharing experiences with them that potentially made her vulnerable to ridicule and attack. Students often seek to arm themselves in any way they can against the more powerful teacher that controls so much of their day. Yet, Christine did not suffer for this sharing; she cared for her students so openly and deeply that they responded in kind, and did not seek to hurt her although they were certainly better armed as a result of her revelations to do so. It is worth pointing out that Christine was best characterized as a caring teacher while teaching at a small rural school with small classes and a deep awareness by the schools' teachers and students of each other. In a later practicum, when she was teaching in a larger school, with larger classes and more separation between the students and the teachers, Christine found it necessary to pull back from the students more often, and did not make herself as vulnerable as often although I would still characterize her teaching as driven by her caring for her students.

Marie is also a teacher for whom caring for students is a feature of her approach to teaching. Marie is warm, non-confrontational, shy, and genuinely cares for her students and wants to know about them and to see them do well. She is a little intimidated by others, and even though she is motivated to see her students do well and succeed, will sometimes avoid conflict and allow inappropriate behaviors to go unchecked in her class. Interestingly, it is her genuine caring for her students that buys her leeway with her

students even in moments when they might try to push another teacher. Marie conveys care for and interest in her students and they respond positively to it.

The power of caring was described as coming as a bit of surprise to a few of the participants. Steven described finding value in his student teacher relationships because of the mutual caring that resulted, not just the control that it gave him in class. "I think they appreciated that I cared about what their interests in music, sports, hobbies, etc. were; I am not just about the material." Kelly described a moment in which she went to bat for a couple of her students in a confrontation with administration. She reflected, "I could tell were really touched by it, because they even said that they never had a teacher that cared about them like that." This was apparently especially noteworthy due to the cultural precedents that were operating in the confrontation. The school in which Kelly taught had a number of unique challenges due to its status as a private school, with a program modified to attract a particular cultural demographic. Many times she expressed frustration and willingness to move onto another school, but her loyalty to and caring for the students ultimately resulted in her deciding to stay at the school. Caring between student and teacher has a powerful influence on their resulting relationship.

Insecurity/Fear

Not all of the personal qualities that emerged as impacting upon the participants' student teacher relationships resulted in a positive influence. Three of the participants in particular described feelings of intimidation, fear, and conflict avoidance. The students, potential conflicts, and the power of their role were all aspects of teaching that scared them and resulted in a change in the interactions between them and their students. These quotes from Marie, Tim and Kelly illustrated some of the insecurity/fear that influenced their relationships:

> I felt bad when I didn't say anything to the students when they were picking on the other student. (Marie)

> It was the first day where I got the feeling that some students really didn't like me much. (Marie)

> Another thing I need to master is <u>demanding</u> the attention of the class during transition periods and especially at the beginning of class. I can't just let them decide when to settle down. (Tim)

> Note to self: Get a backbone and be more assertive! Realizing I am too soft. I know what I am supposed to be doing, but couldn't find the words to say it without being too passive or overreacting. Will be ready next time! (Kelly)

Conflict is an inevitable part of teaching. A teacher is continually asking their students to think, learn and do – often speaking for time and energy that the student resents giving. This is part of the role definition of teacher and student, in my opinion, but this will result in confrontation and at times, conflict between the student and the teacher. Additionally, the interactions within a class full of individuals will inevitably result in periodic conflicts between the students. Once again teachers must place themselves in the midst of this conflict, as they must ensure the safety and learning of all students within their class. If it is the nature of teachers to be afraid of conflict, this perspective will influence the relationships that emerge in the class. At the beginning of his first semester of student teaching, Tim proclaimed how he would "kill them with kindness – they will like me so much, they wouldn't dare misbehave." In the next meeting after making this proclamation, after only a week of student teaching, he confessed that this was not working and that the students were "running riot" in his class. He was being *forced* to become a "hard-assed" teacher like the ones he always hated as a student. Students often do not like the power relationship between them and the teacher, but they do expect it, and in the absence of the teachers' willingness to be 'the teacher' they lose respect for that teacher. A changing relationship between teacher and student is just one of the results.

Tim described being forced to become a person whom he did not believe himself to be. This foreshadows a category later in this chapter in which I discuss in more detail the desire to create a 'teacher image' that does not necessarily reflect who they believe themselves to be as a person. Many times in my own teaching career, I have thought of myself as wearing many masks depending on the situation. A concern for the duplicity of this willingness to "become something they are not" was also mentioned by a few of the participants. Taylor, for instance, describes wanting to be himself while in front of the class. Ben also describes how his exhaustion and time limitations *force* him to become a

teacher that he remembers not liking when he was a student. I mention this briefly at this point, since this does speak to an intentional alteration of their actions away from what they believe to be their natures or natural inclination, toward what they interpret to be the best response to the situation.

"I wouldn't do that"

As a researcher I continually remind myself that any attributed significance to the findings presented in the research must be more than extensions of my own experiences as a teacher, and my subsequent interpretation. Although I am the individual who has chosen which experiences of the participants to discuss, I looked for consonance and dissonance within the data as well as between the data and the literature. It is one of the values of collecting the data using more than one method. The participants in this research do not have a similar triangulating imperative, the majority of the time they must try to understand their teacher experiences through only the lens of their own experiences as a student. It was quite common in their journals for the participants to profess an inability to understand or know what to do because they would not have done the same thing as their students are doing, if they had faced a similar circumstance when they were students. The immediate result is some confusion and misjudgment, but there is also a component of having to fight their own natural inclinations, now that they are the teacher; a fight that they did not have when they were students. Doug for example, discussed having to fight his natural inclinations to seek revenge for the pain his students were causing him by giving them pain right back. Given his power as a teacher, he recognized that it was inappropriate to react that way, even though he wanted to. Taylor wanted to be "goofy" and a practical joker, how he considers himself to be 'naturally', but considered it to be not the best way to fill his new teacher role – he is subjugating his nature to his expectation of what he thinks he *should* be.

Not all of the participants were caught in some sort of confusion between their memories of being students and their interpretation of their students' actions. For example, Abe discussed in his second student teaching practicum how he was quickly forgetting what it was like as a student. His mentor became so concerned by this apparent lack of student connection, that he started creating thought experiments for Abe that

forced him to consider how the students might react and respond to some of the lesson choices that Abe was making.

Many of the participants profess a desire to "be real", have "real student teacher relationships" and to make their lessons "real" for their students. In their journals these participants reported that their intention to be real, by itself, had been well received by their students and often changed the relationship. Considering the instances of the participants' reported misinterpretation of their students' actions and reactions, it calls into question the ability of any teacher to judge what 'real' actually is for their students. What is real for them, particularly when it is filtered through their own natures and their memories of being students, will likely be different from what is real for their students.

Summary

For all of the personal qualities listed above that influenced the relationship experiences of the participants, it is almost cliché to note how much impact the participants' entering attitude had on their experiences. Those that had a willingness to overcome any obstacle, regarding them as opportunities instead of obstacles, consistently related how beneficial and powerful their experiences were:

> I don't know what the hell to do! I'll have to wing it. I'm sure this will be a great learning experience for all involved." (Phil)

> These practicums really are an opportunity to learn and become. I am always trying new things, observing class dynamics, learning and formulating action plans to best suit my changing class. (Ben)

The participants who entered with more rigid expectations of what should and should not be, inevitably found themselves in despair over their situations – and sought to change the situation as opposed to embracing it, learning from it and ultimately, benefiting from it.

> I can't believe that my mentor keeps changing what I have to teach at the last minute – how does she expect me to be able to stand in front of this strange class and know what I am talking about when I have never taught this class before? It is not fair. (Dan)

In this category I discussed some of the personal qualities of the participants that either through observation or through their own recollections in their journals and group

meetings, emerged as having a significant impact on their student teacher relationship experiences. An awareness of the relative significance in the bigger picture, a genuine caring for their students both personally and academically, confidence in themselves, a focus on the individual amidst the class, and a willingness to be 'real' with their students are the highlighted personal aspects that resulted in more positive relationship experiences with their students. Interestingly, the participants throughout the research attributed responsibility for the student teacher relationship to themselves, and thus believed that their personal qualities had a significant role to play in their relationships. In the next category I discuss another factor that influenced the relationship experiences of the participants – an aspect that remained completely outside of the participants' control – the role of the school and community.

5.3) The nature of the community and school

Much of this research focuses on the interpersonal aspects of students and teachers as any research into student teacher relationships must. However, relationships are influenced by more than the interpersonal interactions they are characterized by. A significant category influencing the student teacher relationship for the beginning teachers in this research was the influence of the community and school culture in which they found themselves during their preservice and inservice semesters. As Pianta (1999) stated "The importance of relationships between children and adults is hardly of debate – what is new is the recognition that schools play a major role in providing and regulating this form of relationship (p. 19)."

Each of the 13 research participants taught in a different school in two preservice semesters, and eight of the participants found work as inservice teachers. Thus I was able to observe the influence of 34 different schools/communities on their experiences. It became quickly apparent that the school and the community within which it was situated had an impact on the experiences that each participant had. The schools the participants taught in ranged from small, rural schools with a population of less than 50 students, to large, urban high schools with an excess of 3000 students. It would be useful to examine and contrast each of the 34 schools, but that is not reasonable given the length and time

that would be required and also the focus of this research. As an alternative I chose to illustrate the influence of the school/community by discussing in detail how one of the participants, Doug, was impacted by the schools in which he was placed for his student teaching semesters. I follow this with a brief discussion of the some the aspects of the school/community that emerged as influencing the student teacher relationship experiences of the other participants.

Doug did his first student teaching semester in a small, rural community school and his second student teaching semester in a large urban high school. In both cases he was placed in a senior high teaching environment, but that is where the similarities end. In the rural school, Doug was only the third student teacher to ever be placed at that school and as such, was perceived as 'special' by the staff and students at that school, and was afforded a status comparable to the other staff at that school. In short he was 'noticed' by the school and the community. Interestingly, even though his status as a student teacher was known before his arrival, when he began his student teaching he reflected that he felt his recent university subject expertise and fresh perspective were respected and sought by the existing staff. He commented in his journal that this made him feel like he was respected and empowered by the staff and this translated into a belief in himself when he stepped in front of the students. After observing Doug teach, it was apparent to me that the students treated him with much the same respect as other teachers on staff. When I asked him about this, he attributed the respect to two things. First, he was confident going into class (aided by the belief in him by the other staff). Second, the scarcity of student teachers in the school allowed him to construct his own identity with the students based on his teaching competence and his relationship with them, instead of having to 'fight' against the preconceived stereotyping of students that have been taught by many student teachers. Doug's placement in this small rural school was not all positive experiences. Doug describes being frustrated by being under what he labeled "the scrutiny of the whole community", as well as by the facility, schedule, and resource limitations more typical of small community schools. Nonetheless, his relationship with his students was affected by the nature of the community and school where he did this first practicum. From Doug's perspective, the influence of the community and school was mostly a positive one.

In his second placement, Doug was just one of a seemingly endless stream of student teachers that are placed in that school from semester to semester and from year to year. Additionally, it was quite normal for unfamiliar adults to be present in the school as a parade of parents, substitute teachers and other school personnel were present in the school on any given day. The anonymity of size was quite apparent, as both staff and students hardly even noticed Doug's presence in the school – at least until it was unavoidable, i.e. when he stepped in front of the class as a teacher. Doug was not special – he was simply, as he called himself, "the next one".

In Doug's second student teaching semester, he was not disappointed that the students were unaware of who he was, but he wondered whether he would have been as confident in his role as a teacher if this had been his first placement. Fortunately for Doug, he taught his major (drama) at this school and thus still interacted with many students on a personal level during class, even though the culture of the school seemed to favor independence. Doug believed he had a strong relationship with many of his students, but accomplished this despite the culture of the school, which he contrasted to his student teacher relationships in his previous placement that he felt resulted in part from the school climate. It is interesting to note, however, that despite Doug's belief that his first placement afforded him more relationship potential, he would not have even been able to teach drama at that school, as it was not part of their course offerings.

These two worlds that Doug was placed in to teach had a notable impact on him and the relationships he had with his students. In the small community Doug talked about feeling welcomed and central to the success of his students. People, including staff and students, stopped and talked with him in the halls, and most students knew who he was long before he knew them. His class sizes averaged between 15-20 students and although there were many challenges faced by Doug that semester, he frequently stated in his journal that he felt like a "real teacher" at that school. As a student teacher at the large urban school, Doug had a different experience. He averaged classes in excess of 35 students, and was dependent upon his mentor teacher for access to the room in which he taught his classes, which more often than not, was just minutes before class began. Students were not allowed into classes during non-instructional time, and thus the school was built with huge mall-like areas where the students could 'hang out' before and after

school, during lunch and during free periods. These areas were notable due to their concrete construction and facility to clean – hard plastic table-chair combinations, concrete floors and walls, and large garbage bins everywhere. Perhaps most apparent was the relative sensitivity of the students to strangers in their school. I noted a marked difference in the reactions of the students to my presence as an observer both in the school and in the classes in which I observed Doug. In the small rural school, I was repeatedly asked who I was, why I was there, and even during the lesson there were many glances from students in my direction as they attempted to figure out what this stranger was doing in their midst. In the large urban school, just as Doug described for himself, I was all but anonymous with interactions limited by my willingness to initiate them.

I have chosen to discuss these two schools where Doug did his student teaching because of the stark differences they presented to Doug. They illustrate that the community and school culture do influence teachers, and their student teacher relationship experiences. Doyle (1997) pointed out that effective teaching is not a context-free and fixed property of a teaching behavior, but rather, a local achievement constructed under immediate and particular circumstances: "To teach effectively, then, teachers need to understand local circumstances and how they might be arranged in alternative ways to foster students' thinking."(p. 97) Doug was a successful teacher in both of these teaching environments, having received glowing evaluation letters from his mentors. He described many interactions and relationship experiences, but certainly the context in which they were created were unique and in part due to the context of the school culture and community. His success was partly a consequence of his priority on developing relationships with his students and partly, as Doyle argued, his willingness to embrace the context of this particular school.

Doug's is not the only story in this research. Twelve other participants also experienced the influence that the community and school culture had on their relationship experiences. Abe reflected in his second semester that the smaller classes he had as a result of being placed in a smaller school with fewer students, allowed him "to build a relationship with all of the students since I can devote a lot of time to each individual." Christine comments that her small town "craves her expertise". By contrast, Taylor actually cannot imagine even what it is like to teach in a small school after listening to

comments from other participants at a group meeting, commenting that he loves "being able to ask any number of experts for help" when he needs it, as well as being able to disappear back into the city when his day is done. Whatever the preference of each participant was, when it comes to influencing the student teacher relationship, 'size matters'.

The participants also discussed how differences between junior high and high school influenced their relationship experiences, representing another school-related dimension. Once again, this was a perspective gained by comparing and contrasting their experiences teaching in one semester at a particular school with their experiences teaching at another school in a subsequent semester. Ben talks about how he is building better and quicker relationships with his junior high students then he did with his high school students the previous semester. "I am building good rapport with a lot of the students and I am finding that I am remembering names much quicker than my high school experience. I think that this is because of more teacher-student conversations with grade 7's than I had with grade 11 and grade 12's." After graduating from the University, Marie spent a period of time subbing at different schools around the city during the day while being employed in the evenings to teach high school biology. This has given her exposure to many different communities and school cultures, but one aspect that she returned to repeatedly in her journal was the influence that grade level had on her relationship experiences. The following two quotes exemplify some of her thoughts:

> Today I chatted a little with most of the students in my Science 10 class, and I think I'm getting a feel for the students (i.e. who's going to try to manipulate me, who is genuinely nice, etc.). High school is so much different than junior high; I'm finding it more difficult to form relationships quickly.

> I subbed in an elementary school a couple of times; man do those teachers have it rough! There is no down time for an elementary teacher – not even recess. It is so cute though – my fridge is covered.

Teachers inevitably come to a conclusion about the level they are best suited or willing to teach, and the participants are no exception. It appeared that this decision also had implications for the relationship experiences they had as a result of their choice. One aspect that emerged from the research was that the amount of influence the school and

community had on these beginning teachers changed as these beginning teachers gained experience. As the length of their practica increased and most dramatically, when they accepted a position teaching 'permanently' at a particular school, the participants described being much more strongly affected by the nature of the schools. Topics that had not even occurred to them to question as student teachers were now seen as affecting them and these topics became focus points of concern and discussion. Topics such as amount of pay, moving from class to class, age of school, lack of IT resources, break length, cultural dynamics, politics, course distributions, and so on were discussed commonly as inservice teachers and rarely as preservice teachers. Beginning inservice teachers described school issues from the position of ownership, control and influence – a position they seemed to gain with employment. This suggested that school culture and community increased their influence on teachers once teachers come to count themselves as part of the culture or community and no longer think of themselves as temporary, as student teachers tend to do.

Personal investment in the school culture or community did mediate the experiences of a few of participants, and increased the influence that the culture had on them even as preservice teachers. This was the case either for participants who had requested and received student teaching school placements in communities in which they were already residents, or for those who had gained an attachment to and subsequently a willingness to remain within the community in which they were placed. In these instances, despite their student teaching being temporary the participants invested themselves in a manner similar to the investment shown by inservice teachers, and thus were just as strongly influenced by the community. Both Christine and Phil discussed how, although their student teaching only lasted a few weeks, they already knew most of the students and they shared "an orientation to the world" with the community. Seemingly the relationships these two participants had with their students did not start or end at the same point as the participants who taught in strange environments. Emily is an example of a participant who discusses how the lack of connection to the community influenced her classroom experiences negatively:

> It's hard in a town such as this, to make friends, to create a social network; especially if going to the bar every night is not your cup of tea. It's a very

> different culture. There's nothing to do here but drink. And without a social life, I find myself working too much, being lonely, being slightly depressed. I rely too much on the kids for my social outlet.

In our day-to-day travels we continually make inferences and judgments using our experiences as a contextual and contrasting device. When I sit at the back of a classroom observing a beginning teacher teach a physics lesson, I cannot help but use my own experiences as a physics teacher to make sense of the situation. Unfortunately, we are often guilty of making judgments even when we lack an experiential context. For example, I did not fully appreciate just how fortunate I am to teach and live in Canada, until I had the chance to teach and live in the Middle East. I am continually reminded of this tendency as I observe people making judgments about systems of politics or about society in general, without ever having known any system other than the one they are critiquing. There is an anticipation of difference but experience with any other system is lacking. This a-contextual evaluative tendency was also evident in the statements of the participants during their first student teaching semester as they attempted to attribute significance to their placements in the absence of any other teaching experience. They just do not know if this is 'normal', or if their current situation or context is as 'good' or 'bad' as it gets. This also limits their ability to judge whether what they are experiencing is due to them or the context in which they find themselves. Thus they tend to reference the school culture as observed and experienced as the 'norm', which also increases the influence that particular culture has on them in the beginning. This quote from Dan exemplifies how his experiences teaching in his first student teaching semester, shaped his perspectives on teaching as a whole:

> I feel like I am standing on shaky ground when it comes to getting across to the students, preparing my own material, creating my own resources, etc. Pat says that I do not have the initiative and enthusiasm I once did; I find myself constantly questioning if this is really what I want to do with my life – will all my experiences be like this?

At the time, Dan was in his first semester, teaching in a specialty school that offered programs to pregnant teens and teens who had recently become parents. This school was somewhat unique in the programs offered as well as in the attendance, focus and motivation of its students. Dan was faced with many challenges, and without the context

of any other teaching experience, the school's culture had a much stronger influence on Dan than it might have otherwise. As an epilogue, Dan went on to teach biology in a mainstream urban high school in his second student teaching semester and the tone of his reflections became much more positive – he had 'found' a world that more closely resembled what he needed to be successful.

There are other examples of participants being unusually influenced by the combination of their lack of experience and the school culture or context. In her first student teaching semester Marie was quite successful in forming relationships with her students and was receiving credit from her mentor teacher for her excellent teaching. When discussing these accolades in her journal, she writes: "Be thankful I have such a great school and enjoy it while it lasts!" Marie actually feels guilty about her positive experiences, having been told so many times by peers, instructors or perhaps her teaching parents, to expect hardship, etc. Lacking any experience of her own to contextualize this moment, she questions whether this is an anomaly or whether she can even take credit for it. Interestingly, later in that same semester when Marie was having some difficulties with controlling her class, she writes "All of this crap that I am dealing with right now is going to help me become a better teacher next year." Here she is reflecting on a negative experience but still she is attempting to contextualize her experience against an imagined future – some conception of what a classroom will be for her. The school culture has created the 'norm' by which she contrasts the stories she has been told and her imagined future classroom.

Until this point I have alluded to the school culture and communities' influence in general terms – however, there are many instances in the data in which the participants have named aspects of the school and the community that was influencing them. Likely the single most prevalent of these specific school culture aspects was the role of the school's administration on their relationship experiences. Emily discusses how even as a student teacher, the administration at her school had been very supportive of her and was responsible for creating an "amazing school spirit." Similarly, Doug described how the administration was supportive of him – how he felt "empowered" by their explaining to him in detail what the management philosophy of the school was and then showing a willingness to back him up when he employed the policy. Steven also appreciated the

administration, through what he perceived to be a shared perspective on the relative value of different aspects of teaching. "This morning Mr. G, the Principal, gave us some good info on applying for jobs and interviews. He mentioned student teacher relationships as being a huge part in getting a job. This supports my current philosophy of teaching." Lastly, Phil talked about how a specific action of the assistant principal on behalf of the student teachers greatly increased his relationship potential with the students in the school:

> This morning the assistant principal had all of the student teachers (four of us) go on the announcements and introduce ourselves to the whole school. Throughout the day lots of students came up and talked to me and called out "Mr. I" as I passed them in the hallway and atrium. The announcement in video, to the whole school was a great way to build an initial relationship with all of the students at the school; it definitely helped to make the students more approachable.

As may be expected, a few of the participants did discuss how the administration was an obstacle that was marching to a different drummer than the teachers. Interestingly, these comments did not emerge in the data until the participants were inservice teachers. During their preservice tenure they seemed to lack either an awareness of or perhaps a willingness to attribute culpability to the administration regarding their influence on school culture.

Some other aspects of school culture/community influence referenced by the participants were: assemblies, relationship between mentor and administration, no-zero policy, the target demographic of the school, class scheduling, extra-curricular activities, and racial-cultural anomalies. The following quotes illustrate these aspects:

> Today I discovered one of my biggest pet peeves about teaching. ASSEMBLIES! Not only did the assembly take almost three hours, but it also took away my grade seven and nine classes. Grrrr. Now I am behind. (Christine)

> I seem to be caught in some sort of battle between my mentor and the administration. (Dan)

> Is it my fault or are the students not trying. The questions were on the review sheet nearly word for word as they were on the test. The students saw many examples in fact, that were nearly word for word in homework

> assignments. One of my students missed the quiz and this is now the second quiz missed. I ran into him in the hallway and he said that he slept in. I hate the no zero policy. The students have no consequences for missing anything. What am I supposed to say? He wants help now but I offered it last week and was turned down. How do I as a teacher maintain the control of the situation? (Taylor)
>
> …and 18 students showed up, and participated, in class today! [emphasis in the original] (Phil)
>
> By the time I hit that third class of grade 9 English, I could barely stay focused or even awake. The interaction with the class wasn't there as much, because the content got stale; I felt like I was spinning my wheels during the day. (Phil)
>
> Noon help sessions with the students are better than after school because it does not interfere with the bus or after school activities. (Ben)
>
> This school is corrupt. The principal is using his cultural heritage to convince parents what he is doing is in their best interests. So I have taken control over the things that I can control, and the rest I just don't care anymore. And despite all my complaining about this school, I do have my fun with the kids. I think I finally feel like a teacher, though some days I feel like one of the kids. I feel more comfortable around them than the other teachers. (Kelly)

A topic I discussed with my curriculum and instruction students at the University was the idea of a hidden curriculum; that is, what a student learns at school that is not an overt goal of the educative process. This hidden curriculum includes where to hang out, which bathrooms to use, who is cool and so on. I do this to help them consider how much they will teach their students inadvertently. Similarly, teachers learn many things about the school and teaching in general that are not overtly taught to them as part of being 'a teacher'. It is the belief of Elliott et al. (1999) that school culture is not only the context in which beginning teachers are influenced, but that it actually allows and promotes the abuse of student teachers. They describe school culture as intentionally placing obstacles in the way of teachers to find out who 'deserves' to be a teacher. Riggs and Sandlin (2002) refer to this as a "sink or swim" philosophy being applied to the teacher induction period. Tillman (2000) discussed how experienced teachers will propagate this "sink or swim" philosophy by giving aid to new teachers out of pity and 'having been there', but even they, more often, see new teachers as competition for the 'good classes' or even

perhaps think students are benefited by having new teachers that are not 'good' weeded out. In this context, school culture is more than context; it is contrived to act against student teachers. Beginning teachers not only need to learn how to become teachers and to connect to students, but according to the above authors, how to survive the 'system', as manifested by the school culture.

There was no reference in any of the data from this research to the pressures that mould the school culture and community into being what it is for the participants. They for the most part remain ignorant of the pressures that the administration or school is faced with that drive many of the decisions that ultimately shape the school culture. From my own experiences, I would go so far as to say that most teachers in general are also ignorant of these pressures – not just beginners. Nonetheless, there is much discussion in the literature regarding pressures molding the culture of the teacher preparation programs that the beginning teachers are graduating from as well as the pressures influencing the school culture itself. For the most part, I would label these as Government or Societal pressures.

In January of 2001, for example, American President George Bush, just three days after taking office, issued his educational reform document entitled 'No Child Left Behind'. This was the most recent attempt by the American government to address education in America by developing a document promoted as an educational review and reform document. This is a single incidence of a document created to nudge the American education system in a direction that serves the 'best interests of the American public'. Of course a document of this type, and the subsequent spin-off documents that result such as the American National Teaching Commissions Report (2002), create mixed reactions within education circles (for a critique see Cochran-Smith, 2006; Fergusen and Brink, 2004; or Cochran-Smith, 2004). I mention these documents here not because they are directly relevant to the experiences of my participants in this research, but because they are examples of the kind of pressure that is exerting influence on the school culture that I have discussed in this category. Some of the reforms called for are (a) merit pay, (b) higher entry standards for teachers to get into education programs, (c) test teachers for subject competence, and (d) reward teachers with high test scores. In a nutshell, there is

an explicit intent to increase the emphasis placed on academic success, both by teachers and students, by testing them and rewarding those that achieve the best results.

As Cochran-Smith (2004) pointed out, "teachers are simultaneously taken to be the potential saviors of the American educational system as well as the source of most of its problems (p. 198)." She further suggested that "No Child Left Behind" (2001) is a deliberate attempt to scapegoat teachers specifically, and the education system in general, for what is generally considered to be the "ills of American society". Right or wrong, one spin off from this reform initiative, as reported by Fergusen and Brink (2004), is that by 2008, students unable to achieve mastery on state mandated tests will be denied a high school diploma:

> New teachers will not be hired, we are told, for their ability to be creative, innovative, attuned to the needs of children or knowledgeable about how children learn but for their willingness to implement a curriculum designed by committees that align well with what will be tested in fourth, seventh and tenth grade. (p. 56)

Disturbing to me in these references is that 'good' teaching more and more is being defined by the relative success of a teacher to improve their student's scores on tests. There seems to be a belief that the production of students capable of mastering subject tests is the goal of education. In the next category I discuss how the concerns of the participants regarding their legitimacy as teachers influenced their student teacher relationship experiences. Perhaps it is ironic (tragic?) that these beginners, given the context of this research, are using a relational perspective to judge the legitimacy of their teacher role given the increasing pressure for test proficiency and objective outcomes. I leave the final word to Cochran-Smith (2006):

> Interestingly – and most unfortunately – there is no reference whatsoever to the caring, relational aspects of teaching in 'No Child Left Behind's' definition of "highly qualified teachers" and no recognition at all of the idea that teachers have to be able to build relationships, based on respect, with the students they teach if they expect learning to take place. (p. 13)

Summary

In this category I discussed aspects of the school culture and community that influenced the student teacher relationship. I discussed how the size and level of the school created a culture that affected beginning teachers. This influence was not identical for all beginning teachers, however. Those with more experience, particularly inservice teachers, are much more invested in their schools and thus, seemingly more affected by its culture. Similarly, first time preservice teachers are also more influenced by the culture of the school and community since they have no comparative experience to contextualize their current experiences within. The participants described specific aspects of the school culture that influenced their relationships – elements such as the administration and course schedule - but remain largely ignorant of the societal pressures that help create the culture of the school and community.

5.4) The legitimacy of beginning teachers

People from all walks of life, with varied backgrounds and experiences enter teacher education programs all over the world, and 'magically' they emerge just a few semesters later as 'teachers'. Legally, they are given a document that entitles them to be hired as teachers, but I would ask, is it only upon completing these programs that they become teachers? Long before they graduate, preservice teachers are placed in student teaching environments and asked to teach – to be the teacher. If they are only teachers upon graduating, what are preservice teachers during these practica? As an instructor and field supervisor of student teachers I repeatedly told those I taught and mentored that they needed to believe they were the teacher, from the first student teaching experience on. "If you want to be the teacher and be treated as such, then be the teacher."

Throughout this research, the participants returned over and over again to some variation of the core question of whether they were actually 'the teacher'; as perceived by themselves, their students, their mentors, their schools and so on. I came to conceptualize this as an issue of teacher legitimacy. The participants were questioning their legitimacy as teachers and relating relationship experiences that seemed to be influenced by these concerns.

What does it mean for the beginning teachers when they label themselves (or not) as legitimate teachers? Dictionary.com defines legitimacy as "undisputed credibility", and there were many times in the course of this research when the participants actually used the word 'legitimacy' in reference to their role in the school while student teaching. But there are many more instances in which the participants seemed to be speaking to the issue of 'being the teacher', but used other words like "power", "confidence", "identity" or "marginalization". I want to emphasize that it is my label and categorization that has placed the data I discuss below under the heading *teacher legitimacy*. Other authors have chosen other categorizations. Pittard (2003), for instance, described the transition from student to teacher as related to teacher identity, power and voice. For me teacher legitimacy best encapsulates the variety of data that addressed the participants' perceptions of "being the teacher".

So what is the connection between the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants and their legitimacy as teachers? Abe spoke to this question in one of the early group meetings, quoting the cliché "never smile in the first two months of teaching a new class". Using Levin and Nolan's (1991) terms, that he had learned during a management class taken by all of the participants, he referred to himself as needing *legitimate power* over his students before being able to interact with the students using *expert* or *referent power*. He said he tried to do this by enforcing his right to have expectations and hold students accountable for their actions, and only then did he try to develop relationships with his students. For Abe, relationships were a distinct and separate form of interaction from the times in which he "was the teacher" or "was the expert". The following quote from Abe indicated that his interpretation of student resistance was due to his role as a *student teacher,* which undermined his legitimacy and resulted in him feeling the need to prove himself to his students. "More than any other class, I'm sensing a huge resistance from them to accept that I will be their teacher for the next month and a half."

Abe's approach was met with mixed responses by the remainder of the group. Others also reported needing to feel like the 'expert' or 'the teacher' before they felt comfortable enough to "let their guard down". Particularly at the early stages of the study, there were many indications that the participants compartmentalized many of their

teacher behaviors as though they were undergoing a real world test of what they learned as a student or in university, as opposed to seeing the interconnection of all aspects of teaching – including relationships.

Not all of the participants saw legitimacy as a precursor to relationships, however. Jim openly described how it is his connection to the students that allowed him to realize "they are *my* students".

> They are beginning to look and turn to me as they would any other teacher, allowing me to better establish the kind of relationship I want with them. As I teach and correct and guide them through their educational process we get to a great place where they know I care for and am there for each and everyone of them.

It is through the student teacher relationship experiences he was having that Jim realized he was being treated and received as he perceived a 'real' teacher should be. The student teacher relationship was his vehicle for gaining the confidence to believe he was a real teacher. Similarly Christine discussed how it was the accolades she received interpersonally from her students that convinced her to accept her role as teacher and prompted her to take ownership for the students' behavior and achievement.

Acting like versus being the teacher

I am an instructor of a course for science minors that in theory prepare them to enter the classroom as teachers for the first time. The students are asked to discuss many issues, and practice many strategies that science teachers employ, but how do they gain an understanding of what it is like to actually teach a class of students? For the most part these prospective teachers are scared and despite many university classes in their repertoires, feel unprepared to assume the mantle of 'teacher'. It is a tremendous leap to ask students to literally overnight stop being students and begin being teachers. This transition is well known as difficult and traumatic. Pittard (2003), for instance, describes some of the difficulties of this transition. Thus university education programs build in mechanisms to ease the transition – including observation weeks, reduced course loads to begin with, cohort groups, and mentor relationships. So it is no surprise that it is the rare individual who actually believes they are the teacher right out of the gates. More often than not, the prospective teachers I taught described their image as a façade that they

hope their students do not see through – the participants in my study were no exception to this phenomenon. The participants openly talked about *acting* like teachers, particularly at the beginning of their student teaching experiences, which in most cases transitioned into *believing* they were teachers as they gained experience. This belief in themselves was one of the identifiable changes these beginning teachers underwent as they gained experience and was likely at the root of many of the student teacher relationship changes that also occurred as they gained experience.

In this study there were many instances of the participants describing moments of both 'acting like' and 'being' the teacher. It is useful to discuss some of these moments as they shed light on the basis for which their relationship experiences occurred. It is worth mentioning at this juncture, however, that with only one exception, these moments of *acting* gave way to descriptions of *believing* or *being* as their experience increased. The same participants described different interactions as a product of gaining this belief. The exception was Doug, who for all intent and purposes seemed to genuinely believe he was the teacher right from the beginning and thus his interactions with his students were much more consistent across his practica.

Phil is a participant who was 'open' about his "acting like the teacher" phase. He intentionally dressed in suits with a tie, and carried a brief case with him to his classes. He was intentionally loud and authoritative, and favored initial management strategies tending toward "do it because I am your teacher and I just told you to do so". Steven was pragmatic about this desire to be perceived as a teacher despite not believing it himself. He described how he knew he was not perfect, but learned more each day, and hoped he was doing enough to convince the kids that he was the teacher – believing that if they did his classroom management problems were minimized. In a notable example, Steven openly contradicted the University liaison who was observing him teach when she addressed him as a student teacher in front of the students, stating, "No, I am the teacher." In his journal he described that she may have been right, but the students needed to believe otherwise.

Marie described a moment in which she used a technique she learned at university to facilitate the relationship with a student. I have included it here , because it is an example of her being motivated by what she believed a teacher would do, but also

indicated how parents can influence the beginning teachers' belief of whether they are the teacher or not:

> Today, one of the boys who gave me a hard time on the bus last week worked so hard in class, I decided to call his parents and tell them how impressed I was. She was surprised and asked me if I had to call parents as a part of my student teaching (to which I replied, no I was so impressed with X's behavior). We chatted a bit, and I am really glad I did it. Now I think I have X's parents on my "team" and hopefully he will realize that I do care about him, and want him to succeed. (Marie)

Marie's legitimacy as a teacher was a central feature of this moment described in her journal. Her desire for legitimacy in the eyes of her students and their parents was a prerequisite for one of her central motivations as a teacher – to build a relationship with her students so as to potentiate their chances of success.

The following quote from Kelly also indicated how her student teacher interactions, and thus relationships, were being influenced by her default assumption and insecurity that the students did not consider her to be 'the teacher':

> I don't know how this happened, but all of a sudden I sensed that the whole class of 30, maybe with the exception of a couple kids were pissed off at me. 'Why do you give us such bad marks?' Roberto asked, and I was taken aback. Wow, I thought. So these kids are mad at me because they all did bad on their exam, so of course they blame me for it since I'm the student teacher who must be incompetent and didn't teach it properly. I just realized how small I was in the hierarchy of things. Even the kids I thought I had a good relationship with seemed to hate me at this point.

Kelly later commented that this moment might have been the watershed in which she "lost" the class for good and her crisis of teaching confidence spiraled into the students berating her daily for her actions. Ultimately, Kelly was transferred to a different class where she could start fresh, and in which she was promoted by her new mentor as 'the teacher' and where she felt empowered to be the teacher. The result was a complete reversal of her practicum and Kelly's descriptions of her student teacher relationships after the transfer became almost entirely positive.

One of the mechanisms in place for many of the participants, which were designed to speed up their acclimatization to a new student teaching environment, was a tour of the school along with sage advice from an experienced teacher or administrator at

the school. Both Phil and Kelly mentioned that during one of these tours, they were advised by the principal "to think with the mind frame that you are now teachers". This suggested that experienced educators recognize that beginning teachers who operate from this belief tend to perform better during their tenure at the school. As mentioned earlier, virtually all the participants transitioned to this belief over the course of their student teaching period, and by the time they began their first inservice teaching positions, believed they were the teachers. Below are some of the data that demonstrates this discovered confidence and belief in themselves as teachers. In many cases this transition occurred quite dramatically, striking them as an epiphany.

> I am a teacher. No longer am I just a student teacher, but I am finally a TEACHER! (Christine)
>
> I am now a first year teacher! (Marie)
>
> I don't feel like a student teacher anymore. I feel like a teacher now. I look like a teacher, I'm seen as a teacher, and I'm treated like a teacher. That makes a big difference in how you do your job. (Phil)
>
> Since coming back from spring break I have felt like a full fledged teacher and feel confidant I would be able to begin with my own classroom as soon as possible. (Ben)

Christine was even more specific about how her discovered belief in herself as the teacher influenced her students:

> A lot of students came up to me and gave me hugs and said thank you for being there and thank you for helping me. I did not think that I made that big of a difference in their lives, but apparently I did. At times, many times, I thought that I was no more than a nuisance for them, threatening their education since I WAS only a student teacher. But the minute that I finally accepted myself as a TEACHER instead of a student teacher, the students did as well. Funny how that works, the whole manifesting thing.

During one of the group meetings, Abe discussed his new found belief in himself as a teacher, and reported how he was continually surprised that the students still seemed to like him even though he had to be strict with them. He had become an inservice teacher by this stage, but his comment indicated that while he was a preservice teacher, he did not feel it was his right or that he had enough 'legitimate power', as Abe would

call it, to be strict and enforce rules since he was *only* a student teacher at that stage. It is not surprising that his student teacher relationships changed as a function of this shift in belief.

As the participants gained experience as teachers, the most common form through which they expressed their belief in themselves as teachers (their legitimacy), was by describing a form of ownership for the students, classes and schools.

> It's good to be done my term classes at the university, and be back with my students in my classes here at St. Nick's. (Phil)

> So right off the bat, as soon as I walked in the students treated me like a substitute. They even called me "the substitute". It was totally different than teaching 'my students' in one of 'my classes' where I have some sense of authority. [Referring to a 'flex day' in which he was teaching another teacher's classes.] I don't like being that disconnected from my students. And I really don't like 'the substitute feeling'. I think I would go insane as a substitute teacher. (Phil)

> I did not cry when my students left my class for the last time. I thought I was going to, but I didn't. Not until I turned the lights off in <u>my classroom</u> [emphasis in the original] and locked the door. (Christine)

This ownership seemed to come as a result of accepting that they were the teacher, and with this discovered belief in themselves, they gained an emotional attachment to their students and their interactions with students become more personal (for better or for worse). Emily for instance, described being happy at the end of her first practicum because she could finally rest, whereas at the end of her second practicum she felt as though she was "abandoning her kids". I would wager she worked just as hard in the second practicum, yet it was feelings of loss she described, not relief.

I will conclude this section with a quotation from Marie, in which she described an experience she had as a substitute teacher covering a class that was being taught by a student teacher. It was the first time she had ever observed a student teacher teach (beyond her awareness of her own student teaching just months prior to this):

> I subbed for the first time while a student teacher was teaching the class. It was great! Now I know that how my student teaching went was completely normal. It's funny how much more…power I have than the student teacher (even though I am a 'lowly' sub).

Marie's prior student teaching experience was normalized by this experience. She gained an awareness of some of the power dynamics in the classroom; which she had identified many times previously as an obstacle in her attempts to build relationships with her students. Perhaps if she had the opportunity to observe other student teachers during her preservice period she would have come to believe in herself as the teacher more quickly since, as she points out above, she would have realized that what was occurring in her classes was 'normal'.

Being acknowledged as teachers by others

Coming to believe in oneself as a teacher is rooted in personal discovery, but this transition does not occur in a vacuum. To switch from statements like "I am *just* a student teacher" to "I *am* the teacher", to me, is an astounding feat given the timeframe of the practica. The reactions and attitudes of the people around these beginning teachers had a huge impact on the speed with which they transition from *acting* like the teacher to *being* the teacher, and in some cases, if they transition at all. The perspectives of the students, mentors, supervisors and peers all played a role in the participants' belief in their legitimacy as teachers, but for the participants, the attitudes and beliefs of their students, as discovered through the student teacher relationship, had by far the most affect. I found it interesting that although each of the participants had a different idea of what a 'teacher' was, they seemed to share a global awareness of when they were being treated as teachers and when they were not.

The students of the participants appeared to influence their belief in themselves as the teacher in two ways. First there are a number of instances in which the students' words or actions conveyed to the participants that they were the preferred choice of teacher, which helped the participant themselves believe that they indeed were the teacher. Taylor, for example, had some difficulty coming to believe he was the teacher, interpreting virtually all of his negative interactions with the students as a result of his status as 'student teacher'. Consequently, the moments in which his students made him feel like a teacher came as a bit of a surprise: "That is a good sign that the students look at me as the teacher....It is rewarding and a big confidence boost to see that the students actually look at me as a teacher. I am having a hard time getting past the idea that I am

just a student teacher and that these are my students until we leave here." Christine and Steven both described moments in which the actions of their students indicated to them that their students preferred them as their teachers as compared to the mentor teacher or substitute teacher. As Christine so succinctly puts it, "being treated like a teacher, makes you the teacher":

> It seemed that my entire grade seven class went out of their way to find me and to introduce me to their families. I began to feel more of a part of the community and not only that, I felt like I was meant to be there. I was no longer a student teacher, I was the teacher. (Christine)

> I came back into the room and Mr. O (the sub) was telling Dawn (my top student) to "get to work". She looked at him with eyes raised and sternly said… "You are not my teacher, Miss B is and she is here, so I don't know why you are telling us what to do. (Christine)

> I feel like I have 'proven' myself to my students now. Although the substitute has shown that she knows chemistry very well (much better than myself), the students were constantly coming to me for help. (Steven)

For Jim, in interpreting the reactions of the students, he found confirmation that he had undergone his teacher 'rite of passage'. By surviving their 'test' he had gained their acceptance as the teacher, and thus came to accept himself as a teacher as well:

> They seem to be finished testing me, and now simply accept me as their teacher. It is really a very wonderful feeling, one that I did not reach in my IPT. There is this wonderful little pervading sense that I am the "boss", and they settle in to my leadership accordingly.

The second way that the students of the participants seemed to exert influence on them was through denying them teacher status, either on the basis of their attitudes or actions. Doug talked about how, particularly at the beginning of his first student teaching experience, he had to continually fight a legitimacy battle with the students. The following interaction with a chemistry student described in Doug's journal, suggested that the students expected him to be different than the 'real' teacher and thus behave differently. "No, that is not acceptable; what makes you think you could all of a sudden start getting away with this when you normally can't?" Here Jim expressed how his status as a student teacher resulted in the students being more prone to scapegoat him for their problems. In contrast, the students were more likely to shoulder more responsibility for

their behavior and achievement when the mentor was teaching, since he was perceived as a 'real' teacher and thus *must* be more competent. In Taylor's second student teaching semester, his students were not even subtle in their treatment of him, in one instance, calling him a "jerk" directly to his face. Unfortunately, Taylor likely reinforced the students' actions by ignoring the comment, and when asked why he chose to ignore it, he offered some insight into his own perspective by rationalizing that "it isn't worth the battle, I am going to be gone in a few weeks anyway."

Perhaps the most surprising instance of how the participants' students influenced their belief in themselves as teachers was when the actions of the students indicated that the participant was nothing more than an obstacle to get around. Steven was a teacher who thrived on personal interactions with his students, often taking a few minutes at the beginning of his classes to banter with the students, genuinely trying to interact with them on a level other than that of the academic topic of the day. During a day that I was observing Steven teaching a physics class, and in a bold moment during one of Steven's banter attempts, a student raised his hand and commented to Steven "I appreciate you are trying to get us to like you, but could you just teach us the lesson – I have too much homework already and in two weeks I will never see you again anyway." Steven was literally struck dumb, and rather uncomfortably stood up, returned to the front of the room and began his lesson. Steven later told me that he had never before hated teaching as much as he did during that class.

Kelly described a similar moment during her second student teaching semester. Her students had asked her to tell them what she thought were the most important parts of the unit she had just taught them, and how she would approach it – a not so subtle attempt to figure out what to study for the test . Larson (1995) described this phenomenon as 'Fatima's Rules' in which students do not seek to understand what is being taught to them, but direct themselves toward 'beating the system' by learning what to do and how to do it and nothing more. In this instance it may also be an indicator that the students did not have enough trust in Kelly's ability to convey the course material, and instead are trying to 'beat the system' and obtain adequate marks by regurgitating her emphasis. This behavior actually became so pervasive that when Kelly included unanticipated questions on the test, the class became hostile. She consequently caved in and removed the question

from the test. In a rather emotional journal entry, Kelly expressed this as an indication that she was not the teacher, but rather just an obstacle for the students to get around, as they waited for their 'real' teacher to return. Kelly felt that her relationship with the students was nothing more than them "using her and putting up with her". Later in the semester when she switched classes, she described feeling valued by her students as the teacher, and mentioned moments in which their interactions seemed to demonstrate genuine caring for each other.

The students were not, however, the only people who influenced the participants' perception of themselves as teachers. The mentors and school also had a hand in the potential fostering of legitimacy – whether these beginners were treated as and considered to be teachers or not. The mentors, for example, through action and word, set the tone that was received not just by the participants, but also by the students in class. Kelly discussed how one of her mentors expected to be addressed as Mrs. ___ at all times, and wanted to check Kelly's lessons before each class. The mentor explained to Kelly how these were her classes and that she wanted to make sure the students did not suffer as a result of having a student teacher teach them. Contrast the message this sent to Kelly with the message received by Jim, whose mentor told him the classes he was assuming "were his classes now", and introduced him to the students as "the teacher that will take over for me for the next few months". Jim described feeling empowered by his mentor and believed it helped him to believe he was the teacher right from the beginning, whereas Kelly described feeling marginalized and demeaned by her mentor. It is not difficult to imagine how this tone may have influenced the student teacher relationships that each of these two participants experienced.

The school itself also had an influence on the legitimacy these beginning teachers perceived. During one of our group meetings Phil talked about the mixed messages he received from the administration. On the one hand he was introduced to the students during morning general announcements early in his practicum as "one of the new teachers we have in the school for the next few months"- which resulted in many students introducing themselves to him over the next few days and facilitated his student teacher relationship opportunities. On the other hand he was told that he would not have access to the classroom except when the mentor was in the school and thus had to work in the

staffroom or library. Would this have been expected of a 'real' teacher? It would seem that there is a balance to be achieved between acknowledging that student teachers are not teachers, yet at the same time finding ways to empower them to act as though they are teachers. The participants were at times marginalized as inservice teachers as well. Ben described himself as a "band-aid" in his first inservice year, since he was given few of the options that most of the experienced teachers were given. Admittedly he was there on a one-year temporary contract, but he was given no classroom, was expected to prep and mark in a temporary work space in one of the science preparation areas, was given a hodgepodge of non-academic classes that no one else wanted to teach, and no assurance that there was anything for him after that year was over. Even though he was an inservice teacher, he did not feel he belonged and was so exhausted rushing from room to room that he felt he had no time to stop and actually talk to his students. This lack of opportunity to relate to his students as he had hoped and imagined he might, has prompted Ben to question whether he wants to remain in education. Once again, when the reality fell short of their expectations of teaching or when the participants did not feel they were perceived or treated as teachers, these beginners questioned their legitimacy as teachers.

Other influencers of legitimacy

Within this category I have previously discussed how the perspective and treatment of the participants by their students, mentors and schools had an influence on their personal belief in themselves as teachers, but the participants discussed many other factors that they believed had an influence on their teacher legitimacy as well. It is amazing how even relatively small details influenced the belief these teachers have in themselves. Emily and Marie described how being quite young has influenced their interactions with their students: Emily because she felt she was cast as a role model for some of the girls in her classes, and Marie in so far as some of the boys in her classes regarded her as a sexual object (going so far as to ask her out *during* a lesson). Kelly culturally has been taught to address elders with "Mr." or "Mrs.", but she believed this custom situated her lower in a power hierarchy since she deferred to other adults in the room in the same manner as her students. Taylor actually blamed the nature of the program for the artificiality of the

student teacher experience, stating it is no wonder that he does not see himself as a teacher. "IPT is entirely artificial – I have no legitimacy. It is short-term, we begin and end in the middle of the semester, the mentor and UF is always looking over my shoulder, I have never taught before or even stood in front of a class, and I know nothing of the school history/culture, let alone the students or the community."

The following were all described as contributors to regarding themselves as teachers: having keys to the school and rooms, their name over the door, their own room, being able to choose which topic to teach on any given day, being acknowledged as they walked into the staffroom, and even being able to sit at the teacher's desk in the teacher's chair.

Griffin (1983) summarized some of the factors that influence what he labels 'attitude development' and 'teacher confidence'. He specified that the sex of the teacher, personal coping strategies, amount of teaching experience, the attitude with which they approach teaching, and even the grade level they are assigned all have an influence on the teacher confidence that each prospective teacher gains during the beginning years. Chang (1989), in a study on the influence of mentoring on student teacher confidence, concluded that any factor which influences the confidence of a student teacher, by extension also then has a huge impact on their classroom success.

Whether beginning teachers consider themselves to be 'real' teachers or not - what I have categorized as 'teacher legitimacy'- influences who they are and what they represent in the classroom. A belief in one's legitimacy as a teacher is influenced by many factors. The students and supervisors of these beginning teachers not only influence this belief, but also respond to how the participants represent their belief in themselves through their interactions. The student teacher relationship experiences of the participants were consequently colored by this belief, and as Abe succinctly stated, "you will not be treated like a teacher until you become the teacher".

Summary

In this category I have discussed how beginning teachers' legitimacy as teachers is a central consideration in their relationship with their students – either as a self-perception or in the perceptions of their students, mentors and schools. Some beginning teachers

need to 'be the teacher' before they feel comfortable welcoming the student teacher relationship, while others derive confidence in themselves as teachers from the student teacher relationship. Initially, most of the participants lacking a belief in themselves as the teacher acted as they imagined a teacher should, but with more experience the participants' reflections and interactions shifted to an orientation that they were teachers. There were many factors that influenced the participants' perception of their teacher legitimacy. These influences included incidentals like being given keys or teacher chairs, but the factor with the most pronounced influence on the self-perception of the participants was the actions and words of their students. Finally, the mentors of the participants during their practica also had a relatively significant impact on the legitimacy they attributed to themselves as teachers.

5.5) Student teacher relationships influence beginning teacher efficacy

> I feel fulfilled…like this is what I thought teaching should feel like. I cherish the relationships I have built with my students, and I know I have made a difference in my students' lives.

This quotation from Kelly summarizes in many ways the hope and belief of most teachers, particularly as they begin their careers; they hope that they will have a positive impact on their students – that they will make a difference. How does a teacher know if they are positively (or negatively) influencing their students? For the participants in this study, they derived this awareness partly through the relative success of their students on tests, but mostly through their relationships with their students.

There were many incidences in this study in which the participants reflected upon an experience with the intent of evaluating their success as teachers. In many ways their practica and first few years of teaching are defined by this evaluation as they seek to set themselves apart from their peers and colleagues. They are attempting to establish for themselves *if* they are 'good' teachers, and for prospective employers that they *are* 'good' teachers (as established through evaluations and feedback from supervisors and mentors). I have chosen not to define what 'good' teaching is, but for the participants there was an evident awareness of what 'good' and 'bad' meant in their many descriptions of the feelings that their teaching experiences were generating. Those moments that touched the

participants enough that they discussed them in their journals or group meetings were not descriptions of satisfaction with their gain in the more 'technical' teaching skills like test creation, curriculum interpretation, or lesson planning. Rather, these moments were almost always a product of their interaction and relationship with their students and their convictions about teaching in general. It was their student teacher relationships that affirmed their belief in themselves as teachers or in some cases, refuted it. The efficacy of these beginning teachers, the belief in their power or capacity to make a difference or produce a desired effect in their students, most often was evaluated by way of interpreting their relationships with their students.

The power that the student teacher relationship had over the self-efficacy and self-esteem of the participants was quite remarkable, as demonstrated in the following quotations taken from the participants' journals.

> I am becoming very attached to the students and am not looking forward to leaving. I LOVE teaching! For the first time in all of my university and life experiences, I have never been so satisfied. I finally found my place in the work world. I am and have always been destined to be a teacher. (Christine)

> That comment really meant something to me and made me feel A LOT better since I know that some of my students care about me. These relationships you build with students REALLY are critical to your survival. I never really acknowledged how important they are until today. (Abe)

> She told me that Matt goes home and brags about me! What a huge compliment!!! This makes me so happy! Wow, she was so grateful, and yet I was starting to think that maybe I let my students down a bit… Hmmm. It's amazing how much a little compliment can change your day! (Steven)

> During my practicums the only thing that kept me going sometimes were the relationships; knowing I changed a kid's life for the better. (Marie)

> There are several students that I am genuinely connecting with. Several students ask if I am teaching, seek my attention and generally are interested in me. I can see now that it will clearly be these types of students that is what makes teaching special to me. I sense already that it will be the relationship that I can build with my students is what keeps me desiring to be a teacher. Planning, meetings and other clerical jobs must be done – they are part of the package. But it is the connection I can make with my students that will help them muster the internal motivation to succeed. (Jim)

> They had a good laugh at me when I wiped out too, and these moments brought us closer as well. Over the course of this semester, I really got to know my students on a more personal level, and I think that's what keeps me going everyday at work. (Kelly)

> At this stage, I feel I will eventually be more comfortable with the curriculum and be able to create a better learning environment through more polished lessons. However, I seriously question whether or not I will be able to connect with the students on any level other than the "director" of course curriculum. This is the deal-breaker for me… if I am unable to connect, possibly due to my own personality and social skills, then I believe I am in the wrong profession and it would be best for the students and me if I leave the profession. (Ben)

Becoming a teacher is no small feat. It requires years of commitment to the idea that the time, personal and financial costs will be worth the attainment of the goal; that is, to be hired and acknowledged by all concerned as a teacher. How each prospective teacher defined what 'being a teacher' is differs, but all of the participants seemed to require an affirmation from their students (and to a lesser extent, their mentors) that the price they are paying is worth it and that they are making a difference. The last quote above from Ben, in which he contemplates quitting teaching because of his inability to form connections with his students, despite having made so many sacrifices to get to that point, is a testimony to how powerful the student teachers relationship was for these beginners. The efficacy of these beginners, their ability to make a difference for the students, was a central concern in their deciding whether they had made the right choice in entering this profession. Obtaining affirmation from their relationships with their students became so powerful for a few of the participants that they gave time from their personal lives to continue the relationships at their prior level of commitment. For instance both Steven and Marie continued to volunteer at the schools in which they had done their practicum even after the practicum was finished. This quote from Steven demonstrated how the relationships that he fought so hard for early on, continued to motivate him to work at the school even after his practicum has finished:

> My students are starting to come up to me and asking me to stay as their teacher. It feels great! Although I was feeling a little stressed in the beginning of my APT, I am now at a controllable and maintainable level where I am really enjoying my time teaching. I have really formed some strong connections with my students, and I will be really sad when I have to

> go. Hopefully I will be able to get on the Sub list here. At the very least, I will be trying to volunteer once a week.

Similarly, Kelly wrote about how she changed her plans for the next year as a result of the student teacher relationships she had with her students:

> I am actually considering staying on for one more year to see my grade 11s now graduate. I would love to get them through chem 30 and bio 30, and for a long term teacher goal, hopefully one day run into them and see what they made of themselves.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, literature on how the student teacher relationship affects beginning teachers is not common outside of a discussion of its influence on student achievement. An exception to this pattern is some discussion of how the efficacy of teachers, particularly beginners, is strongly influenced by their relationships with their students. Oberski, Ford, Higgins and Fisher (1999) write about their interviews with beginning teachers at the end of their first year of inservice teaching and concluded that "positive relationships with pupils had been established and that this was an achievement fundamental to feeling good about being a teacher" (p.142). Stuhlman and Pianta (2001) discussed how a teachers' expression of their own effectiveness is most closely tied to their style of interactions with their students. In other words, they described their effectiveness as teachers by describing experiences related to their relationships with their students.

Emily was a participant who had two very successful practica as a student teacher, judging from the comments by her mentors during the practica as well as in the glowing evaluations and letters of reference she received from her two mentors during those practica. She went on to be hired by a relatively small, isolated, 'blue-collar' community which was distant from her home, to teach junior high science. By accepting this job, Emily separated herself from her support network of her family, friends and the activities she formerly used to manage stress. She described how, living in this new community in the absence of many of her traditional activities, teaching became not only her central activity, but on most days her only one. "I wake up and I work, and I work until I go to sleep." The physical and psychological exhaustion this created quickly changed her outlook on teaching; so much so, that even though she had on many occasions discussed how positive her practicum experiences were, she now had come to periodically resent

listening to the positive experiences of other participants. As Goddard and Foster (2001, p. 359) noted, this is not surprising since "Often, it seems, we ignore or forget Maslow's hierarchy and focus solely on the growth rather than the deficiency needs of teachers. About to begin a new – and to some their first – job, beset by personal doubt and debt, sometimes far from home, beginning teachers are at a low psychological ebb." Teaching for Emily had become a chore, and for the first time she had begun to question her decision to become a teacher. The rare instances in which she described wanting to continue teaching in her new community were when she reflected on her interactions and relationships with her students – she described feelings of guilt and betrayal over having contemplated "leaving my students". According to Cochran-Smith (2006), this willingness to stick it out in situations that are challenging for the teacher are essentially due to the efficacy derived from the relationship with their students. "…good teachers stay in teaching – even in the most difficult of circumstances and with the most marginalized students – for reasons that have more to do with loving and dreaming – with teaching's heart – than with either its physical conditions or the availability of the latest techniques." (p. 11) Cochran-Smith (2006) goes on to state that:

> Teaching is relational and is fundamentally about forming connections that scaffold learning. Good teaching is (at least partly) about developing loving and caring relationships with students as human beings and, at the same time, being deeply committed to ensuring that all students have rich opportunities to learn academically challenging material that will maximize their life chances.(p.12)

Flores (2003), (in reference to Deemer & Minke, 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) supports the assertion of Cochran-Smith regarding the importance of the student teacher relationship for creating and supporting efficacy in teachers. However, he added that this relationship is also a key motivation for beginning teachers to change. If the actions of the teachers did not create the feelings of efficacy that they desired, they would quite quickly alter their instructional style to better create reactions in their students that more closely matched their expectations of what they should be.

> One of the most important elements in determining teacher change was student feedback, motivation and achievement. Not only were their reactions in the classroom crucial to teachers' analysis and reflection upon their own performance, but they also affected (positively and negatively) teachers'

> sense of self-efficacy, defined as the personal belief about one's own ability to influence student learning and achievement. (Flores, 2003, p. 18)

Summary

The student teacher relationship is a vehicle that beginning teachers use to evaluate the impact they are having on their students. This perceived impact or influence is contrasted with the preconception the participants have that they should make a difference in the lives of their students. The power of the student teacher relationship over the self-esteem and efficacy of the participants in this study cannot be overstated. Claims of finding "what they were meant to do" are not uncommon, and the student teacher relationship features heavily in their personal judgments of their success as teachers. This claim is supported in the literature by a variety of researchers who report how important the student teacher relationship is for teachers in determining whether they are making a positive or negative difference in the lives of their students.

5.6) Content competence and the student teacher relationship

Imagine that you are a grade 11 biology student, sitting in class two months into the semester, and you are looking at a student teacher who has just been introduced to you as your new teacher for the next five weeks. You know that typically student teachers are quite insecure and although you want to do well in class, this is an opportunity. They do not know you, have never taught this class before, and there is of course the reputation of student teachers as easy to abuse since they have never had to teach and manage a class before. What do you do? What are your expectations? What do you want from this interim person? Will you join or lead your classmates in an attempt to abuse the situation? Do you believe that this new teacher can teach you the material well enough for you to not suffer when it comes to the final exam and your final grade?

The beginning teachers in this study walked into circumstances similar to what is described above more than once, and as all attested to – it was not an easy time. They felt pressure from the various stakeholders, and for the most part were expected (and expected of themselves) to be teachers right out of the gates, yet not one had experience teaching before their first practicum. This was an 'interesting' time for these beginners,

because it represented a significant stage in their progression as teachers and it was a time when they finally got to put into practice what they had learned and what they imagined they could accomplish as teachers. Yet, as was suggested in the opening paragraph of this category, students are not passive participants during this time; they also are reading and reacting to the new circumstance. Thus, the preservice teachers have to function as teachers in a world that to them, and to those around them, was perceived as a *simulation* of "real" teaching.

When the participants in this study were preservice teachers and were asked at the beginning of their first preservice semester what they considered to be the minimum requirement of a student teacher during their practica, the most common answer was that they must at least deliver the content. Subject content delivery is the goal they *have* to demonstrate an ability to reach and the remainder of what a teacher does is important but is generally considered to be in addition to the content minimum standard. Thus, the student teacher relationship for the participants was considered a facet of teaching beyond the minimum required of a teacher. If they felt it was an obstacle to their preparation or delivery of the content, it was subjugated to the delivery of that content. This suggested two things: first, that the participants considered the student teacher relationship to be distinct from the other aspects of teaching, and second, that at least initially it was not valued as highly as content delivery. There seemed to be little awareness among the participants that all aspects of teaching are interconnected and interdependent. They did not realize that when they were teaching the subject, they were also creating a relationship with their students and creating a context for their classroom management. This compartmentalization of teaching became less evident with their progression through their program and by the end of their first semester the participants commonly referenced their teaching as a mixture of many of the components they formerly thought of as distinct. Ben, for instance, discussed how his teaching in his second semester was more "organic" and rooted in the moment by moment comprehension and responses of his students. He no longer felt bound to push through the curriculum so rigidly, preferring to prepare and teach based on the pace and interests of his class. He described how his comfort with the material allowed him to shift his focus to his students and thus better foster a relationship with them and better gauge their comprehension level as a result. It

should be mentioned that Ben also moved from teaching high school physics and science in his first semester (his minor), to teaching multiple classes of the same level of junior high math in his second semester (his major). His new found student focus was likely more than a product of experience, but illustrated how his student relationships were facilitating the effective instruction in his courses.

An obligation to deliver the curriculum is one of the requirements of being a teacher, and this fact was not lost on the participants. With increased pressure on teachers and students to have the students do well on external exams, beginning and experienced teachers alike are very sensitive to curricular coverage, timing and comprehension. Where does the student teacher relationship fit into this priority? As alluded to in the Ben example above, the participants' student teacher relationships increased their sensitivity to the interests and comprehension of their students. As their relationship deepened, the participants could better gauge where the class was at without relying on overt indicators of incomprehension such as questions or poor results on quizzes and tests. Emily for example, without even realizing she was doing it, could be observed asking specific students why they "looked confused", or how the topic "relates to what happened to you last night?" She was using her awareness of her students to connect the material to them on a personal level. Ben and Jim discuss in their journals how surprised they were at how much they knew about their students and how often they take that into consideration as they prepared lessons for their classes. The information they were gaining "as they got to know their students" alerted them to use more than curricular documents to create lessons for their classes. A particularly vivid example of how the student teacher relationship allowed the participants to facilitate comprehension in their classes was found in a contrast of two quotes from Kelly – one from her first preservice practicum and the second from her first semester as an inservice teacher:

> I prep and prep and prep and I still can't seem to get them to understand – there are just no more examples in the texts or curriculum that I can use. Now what do I do?

> Half of the students seem to be getting it. The others I have to find a way to interact with them so that I know what to do.

Kelly came to rely on her relationship with her students to help her find new ways to deliver the difficult subject content. Kelly also discussed how her student teacher relationships have changed the nature of questioning in her classes as well. During her second preservice practicum, Kelly describes her students' questions as "…questioning my authority and competence as a teacher. They don't believe that I know what I am talking about just because I am a student teacher." Once again this contrasts with a quote drawn from her inservice journal. "I am glad more students are asking questions so that I am able to see what they need help with, and it helps because other students may be experiencing the same problem, but are afraid to ask." Kelly had a different relationship with her students in her inservice semester than she had with her students during her first preservice practicum; she described being comfortable around her students and seemingly this has changed her perception of questions from challenges to opportunities. Kagan (1992) is explicit in drawing a connection between pupil learning and the integration of management, instruction, and relationship by teachers. He reflected that until beginning teachers recognize this, regardless of subject expertise, they will not reach their potential as teachers.

Gaining confidence with teaching the curricular content they are tasked with is a central concern of beginning teachers, and as was described above, the student teacher relationship can help teachers gain this confidence. However, for these participants who initially saw their relationships as distinct from their curricular obligations, a focus on the student teacher relationship typically followed a gain in content confidence, not preceded it. There were many instances in the data in which the participants described almost a Jekyll and Hyde phenomenon in which they are relaxed and bantering with their students before and after class, but once class began, they became tense, serious and focused on the material to be covered that day. Christine described how she needed to be "all business" when in front of the class, but "lets her guard down" during seat work and after class. Phil was observed sitting, talking with a few of his students about the latest game they had all played just prior to class, but when the bell rang, he stood up, moved to the front of the class and for the remainder of the period was stiff and only referred to the students collectively as "you guys." He had lost his ability to see the individual, and seemed only to see his lesson plan and the amorphous mass he was teaching – the class.

When asked about his pre-class routine, Abe summarized rather succinctly his frame of mind going into a class early in his first preservice practicum. He simply replied "I don't want to waste time bullshitting with students – I have too much to do to get ready for class." A relationship with his students is clearly not his priority at this point. Interestingly, in his journal later that same semester, Abe described his realization that he was not putting enough attention on building a relationship with his students and this was hurting him as a teacher. His solution is summarized in the following quote, but note how, even though relationships are now on his radar as a concern, they remain something distinct from his in-class time with his students:

> It's difficult to establish a relationship with the kids when you have so much material to present in 55 minutes. I volunteered to help students at lunch or after school, so hopefully a few of them drop by then so I can take the time to get to know them.

Time and time again the participants mentioned how gaining confidence in their curricular competence enabled them to "discover" their students. By not having to dedicate so much of their attention to their lesson plans, they almost literally looked up from their binders and found a bunch of individuals looking back at them – each with personal needs and concerns. Jim actually described a moment of really 'seeing' his students for the first time as an epiphany and it was from that moment on, that his relationship with his students became a central consideration when making content decisions. Other participants, including Marie, described not wanting interpersonal aspects to interfere with her lesson plan, and thus intentionally avoided interacting with her students except during non-instructional time. It was not until there was some indication from her students that she was acknowledged as "the expert" that she felt relaxed enough to interact with her students on a level that she considered to be outside of the curricular intent for the day. Again, using terms borrowed from Levin and Nolan (2003), Marie needed to have *expert* power before she would allow herself to attempt to interact with her students from a *referent* power base. Marie described in her second preservice practicum how she would put an unusually large amount of work into her lesson preparation so that she would be confident enough to interact with her students on a level other than content and still be able to return to the content. This pattern of

beginning teachers needing confidence with content before allowing themselves other interactions is also described by Aikenhead (2006), "Novice teachers naturally lack confidence in teaching canonical science content, and until a reasonable confidence is attained, humanistic instructional outcomes are relegated to a low priority" (p.77).

The participants described other ways that their content focus was influenced by their student teacher relationships. Abe discussed how his students were notably keener to engage with the material if they had a 'good' relationship with him. Seemingly they wanted to live up to Abe's expectations. Abe first described noticing this while teaching chemistry to an unusually advanced class and being acknowledged by them as "knowing his stuff". It was the realization that he could get students to work harder and do better "when they like me" that began a shift toward his valuing the role that the student teacher relationship might have for encouraging students to achieve in his classes. For him the goal was content mastery by his students, and the student teacher relationship became a tool to use in that pursuit.

Upon the completion of their physicians training, during their induction ceremony, doctors swear a Hippocratic Oath – the oath to 'do no harm'. In an analog to this oath, beginning teachers seem to enter their teaching practica with the hope that they will be 'good' teachers, but in the minimum, 'do no harm'. For the participants of this study, this equates to ensuring that the content of the courses they teach is delivered in such a manner as to potentiate their students' chances to do well. This is a tremendous stress for beginning teachers and this stress results in an initial focus on content and its delivery – often at the expense of the other aspects of teaching. It should be no surprise then that these other aspects, like the relationship they have with their students, is relegated to a status below content delivery. If the participants in this study are any indication, however, with a gain in experience there is an increasing awareness of the interdependence of content delivery, classroom management, and the relationship they have with their students. They begin to understand that the relationship they have with their students is a key component in the relative success they have at getting students to do well in their classes.

Summary

Beginning the student teaching phase of their teacher education programs was a stressful time for beginning teachers. They have many concerns during this time, but a commonly described insecurity and focal point was their comfort delivering the course content and potentiating student success in a manner that was comparable to that of the regular teacher. The result was an initial focus on course content often to the exclusion of the other pedagogical components. For some of the participants in this study, their student teacher relationships gave them the confidence to believe they were delivering the content as a "teacher should". More often though, the participants needed to gain confidence in their content competence themselves, before they "discovered" their students sitting in front of them. Only once they had gained some confidence in their understanding and delivery of the course material did they feel they could shift their focus to their students. In a few cases, the student teacher relationship was seen as a tool for motivating the students to do well in the class – that is, some participants believed that the students were more apt to work and be motivated if they "like the teacher". In all cases, the participants displayed some form of progression from a content orientation to a more student centered approach; that is, relying on their student teacher relationships to judge their effectiveness at assisting students to understand the course material.

5.7) Mentors' influence on the relationships of beginning teachers

Mentoring is an issue that is discussed frequently in education literature. The majority of this literature deals with the mentoring of inservice teachers during their first few inservice years – providing support and "inside information" to teachers beginning their teaching in unfamiliar schools and communities. Both Riggs and Sandlin (2002) and Zuckerman (1999) indicated the importance of providing a formal mentor for beginning teachers in their first few years of inservice teaching. An example of the many benefits they described is how the establishment of a formal mentor label provides a communication pathway for the novice and mentor that sidestep any stigmas that might normally be attached to a teacher approaching a colleague for help. The term mentor is also used to describe the inservice teachers that preservice teachers are assigned to for their student teaching practicum, and whose classes these novices will "borrow". It is in

this sense that I discuss the role of the mentor in the student teacher relationships of the participants. I do this because even though the participants were followed into their first year of inservice teaching, none of them were given a formal mentor during that period. When the participants refer to their mentors, they are referring to the teacher they were assigned to during their preservice practica. Given their reliance on our research cohort for support, advice, and resources during their first year of inservice teaching, seemingly they would have benefited greatly from the continued presence of an informed individual in their schools who they could relate to as a mentor.

It is not surprising to me that the teachers chosen and labeled as mentors by the University, and whose classes the participants were assigned to, have many influences on the participants. Imagine for a moment the specific nature of what actually happens when the student teachers enter their respective preservice schools to begin their student teaching. They are entering strange environments, in which for the most part, they do not know the kids, the teachers, the parents, the administration or even "the rules". Most have never taught before, and have not even finished the university coursework designed to inform their teaching. The mentor conversely, after having spent weeks teaching their students and establishing the tone and rules of conduct in the class, is asked to step aside so that a relative novice can assume his/her classes – classes that ultimately she/he is still accountable for vis-à-vis the parents, administration and the students. This is not an easy transition for the beginning teacher, the mentor, or the students, and all concerned stand to be heavily impacted during this student teaching period.

This research is focused on the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants, and thus I limit the discussion to the influence the mentor has on the relationships of the participants, although there was also discussion of their influence on the participants in ways that fall outside of the student teacher relationship umbrella. I further limit the discussion to data that indicates a direct impact by the mentor on the participants' student teacher relationships, since it could be argued that any interaction that influences the tone of the class or the attitude of the participant had an influence on the participants' student teacher relationships. For example, if a comment by a peer positively affects my mood, my interactions with others after that would be different than if that comment had negatively affected me. Thus an attempt to discuss these influences

comprehensively is difficult. To illustrate some of the indirect influence a mentor can have on the participants' relationships, I have listed two examples that were described by the participants below:

- Both Phil and Abe described how they were denied access to the classrooms in which they taught during the day, until their mentors arrived. This resulted in Phil finding a corner of the staffroom in which to work until his mentor arrived, and Steven simply stopped arriving at school until the last moment since he could not get into the class until then anyway. Both participants described feeling harried and uncomfortable at the beginning of the day as they scrambled to put everything together in class in time to begin teaching. They did not have the years of experience and infrastructure in place and were made to function as though they did. The result? Aside from what this indicates about their relative position in the hierarchy of the school, it created a different tone for and interaction with their early classes as they scrambled to get ready for their first class having only gained access to the classroom minutes before the students began to arrive.

- At many times during his student teaching practica, Ben described exhaustion and despondency about how much he had to sacrifice to keep his teaching at a level that he considered to be "good teaching", which Ben defined as subject mastery and personalized and genuine interaction with his students. What was interesting, was how his mentor and even other teachers who he had a chance to observe in school became his "light at the end of the tunnel". They represented proof that a teacher could survive the first few years and become a good teacher without so much personal sacrifice. His mentor was inadvertently showing Ben what it was like to be on the other side of the "survival stage", and by doing so, motivating him to expend himself more than he would have normally.

So how do mentors directly affect the student teacher relationship experiences of their beginning teacher charges? In the course of their preservice years, the mentor was a focal point of much discussion and writing by the participants – having both a positive and negative impact on the participants. Given this noted impact, the entire research cohort found it remarkable that more care was not taken when matching the mentors with beginning teachers. The placements they were given for their preservice practica seemed arbitrary and for all intent and purposes, random – the only consideration being a superficial match between the mentors' courses and the novice teachers' major or minor. This contradicts the findings of Chang (1989), who in an evaluation of many preservice programs recommended that mentors "be evaluated and chosen carefully from veteran teachers", and that "careful consideration be used in making matches between beginning

teachers and their mentor" (p.5). As Capa and Loadman (2004) emphasized when they quote Booth (1993) "... the mentor teacher plays the most vital role. Research studies indicated that mentor teachers have been perceived as the most significant person in the student teaching experiences" (p. 4). What follows are some of the moments described by the participants that demonstrated how the mentor directly impacted the student teacher relationships of the beginning teacher.

Positive influence

Doug did his first student teaching practicum in a small, remote, rural school. This made Doug a novelty for the school, being only the third student teacher they had ever received from the University. Although Doug was "special", he was not singled out for his student teaching status, but rather actually describes feeling "empowered" by his mentor. Doug was given clear curricular expectations, extensive feedback, and the encouragement to use his own best judgment, yet was free to approach the mentor at any time for needed support. Consequently, Doug felt "like the teacher" and thus interacted with his students out of a conviction that he was the teacher. Doug never felt undermined in front of the students and appreciated being treated as a colleague by his mentor, not as a "student teacher". As was discussed in a previous category, the legitimacy that Doug enjoyed as a teacher enabled him to interact with his students as "a teacher" and not as a "student teacher" as was described by other participants.

During a conversation following one of his lessons, Steven described how he "has many of the same ideals and priorities as his mentor teacher". In his opinion, this minimized the impact of the transition from his mentor to him when he assumed his mentor's classes. As he so succinctly put it, "students resist change, therefore the less the change the better." He believed that the students in his classes accepted him much quicker because the classroom tone did not change substantively once he became the teacher of the class; he reinforced the patterns of interaction already in place. Even though Steven was paired with this particular mentor for reasons other than similarity in teaching approach or philosophy, this "good match" facilitated the students' acceptance of Steven when he took over his mentor's classes.

Abe described his second student teaching mentor as a "wonderfully patient and personable person". When speaking to me of Abe, the mentor admired his subject competence but admitted that he worried about his "coldness to the students". In an attempt to address this, he offered Abe strategies that would allow him to manage his classes in a manner more in tune with the students than the content oriented and confrontational style he typically employed. Eventually he even created teaching scenarios for Abe that 'forced' Abe to see the class from a perspective more in tune with the perspective of the students. Abe admitted that he was quite profoundly affected by his mentor's efforts and by his observations of his mentor while he was teaching. "Mr. H never has to resort to these consequences (or not that I have seen), so it makes me question whether or not I am doing something wrong." Consequently, Abe invested more effort in connecting with his students on a level beyond the material he was teaching them. In my observations of Abe and his mentor I was particularly impressed with the mentor's willingness to let Abe find his own way, finding success, and making mistakes as the case may be, but always trusting that no permanent damage was being done to the students in the process.

There are a number of other instances in the data that demonstrated the positive impact the participants' mentors had on their relationships (intentional or otherwise). The following quotes taken from the participants' journals show some of the different ways the mentors positively impacted their relationships:

> I did experience a lot of success in P and S [Emily's preservice practica schools]... I believe that one of the major differences is that there I constantly had someone to reassure me. My mentors were excellent and always told me what to expect and what to change and what to put up with and not put up with. I know that my biggest difficulty this year was establishing routine. In the other schools I taught at, those routines were always in place and so I simply had to continue my mentors' good work. (Emily)

> My mentor talks to students who are unprepared, one to one, and calls on students that raise their hands, while ignoring students that blurt out. K [the mentor] listens to his students well by taking their views and comments into consideration. (Tim)

> My mentor, Kris, has been really great and supportive as well. She has provided me with constructive feedback and opportunities to get right in and

> teach. I am really getting a chance to connect to the students. She also takes time with me throughout the day to discuss lessons, planning, and how things are going. (Phil)
>
> A couple of the girls from my grade seven class approached me and asked me if I was training to take Mr. O's spot. I laughed and said no. They looked rather disappointed and said that they really like me teaching them. They said that I explain 'stuff' in lots of different ways and make it fun. Apparently Mr. O doesn't. What can I say? I am very passionate about science and I think the students see that. (Christine)

The influence of the mentor on the participants' student teacher relationships was overt. Whether this influence was intended and did not vary from situation to situation, it does underlie the important role the mentor plays in the relationships that beginning teachers form with their students. Unfortunately this influence is not always positive and as will be seen in the next section, the mentor can also hinder the relationships as well.

Negative influence

As I have aged I have noticed that roles traditionally held in some reverence due to their history and reputation have become tarnished and 'real' to me. Whether it is doctor, priest or teacher, the people who assume these positions are driven by many of the same urges and needs as we all are. This was a hard realization for some of the participants as well, as at times they describe how their mentors seemed either intentionally or inadvertently to be subverting their attempts to become teachers themselves. I do not believe these mentors were intentionally sabotaging the efforts of their protégés, but intentional or not, the participants reported examples of their mentors hindering their student teacher relationships.

In his first student teaching practicum, Abe was assigned to teach academic chemistry with a mentor teacher who had been teaching a particular group of students for 3 years (grade 10-12). This class was highly motivated and openly admired and "loved" Abe's mentor. This sounds like an opportunity, but Abe found himself continually reminded by his mentor that the success he was having with these students had more to do with them and little to do with his skills as a teacher. Instead of taking this opportunity to build confidence in Abe, she seemed to use it as a tool to "keep him humble":

> Ruby helped to bring me "back down to earth". We basically discussed how the classes I was teaching are not realistic classes for a first year teacher to have, and that I was extremely fortunate to have them for my first round of student teaching.

Abe commented during a school visit that it was not worth the time to try to build a relationship with the chemistry class since "they only seem to trust my mentor teacher". I was later amazed to see how during the lesson, Abe's mentor would sit amidst the class, joking and laughing with the students. When Abe attempted to engage his students it was quite common for his mentor to interrupt with her own comment and insight. Abe's mentor clearly "loved" this class, and she was not about to let a student teacher compromise her relationship with them.

In a similar fashion, Phil's mentor clearly dominated the room during and in between Phil's classes. Phil had his interactions limited to those moments he could foster while teaching the material and any moments he could "sneak" in while his mentor was occupied elsewhere. It appeared that this dominance was rooted in an unwillingness by the mentor to release the control she had worked so hard to establish prior to Phil's arrival. In fact she confessed to me in one of the quieter moments during Phil's lesson how hard she had worked to get this class "under control". Thus she continued to rule from the back of the class, openly managing the class whether Phil was teaching or not. There was no doubt who was "the teacher" in those classes.

As mentioned earlier, there are not many things that student teachers control when they are in the midst of a student teaching semester. But one of the few aspects of their teaching that they do directly control is the amount of preparation they put into each lesson. Many of the participants describe how they could give themselves a sense of confidence through intricate lesson preparation. They have limited teaching experience and almost without exception, were teaching unfamiliar courses and material. Thus preparation for them was a key to gaining the confidence they needed to stand in front of the class and to appear competent and responsive to the needs of the students. As two examples, the mentors of Kelly and Dan did not give them preparation time before they were asked to teach a lesson. In both instances, the mentor openly professed a distrust of the participants' content knowledge and thus needed to "approve" each lesson before the

participants were permitted to step in front of the students. Inevitably much of the preparation they did do was deemed unsuitable and thus was often vetoed at the last second before the lesson, with the participants being verbally told what to say or do instead. The result was not surprising: Kelly and Dan foundered with the material or unfamiliar approach they were directed to use no more than 5 minutes before class and of which they had no ownership. The students picked up on this insecurity immediately and quickly reduced the lesson to chaos – thus reaffirming the belief by the mentor that she could not trust the student teacher. In both cases, the stress on the student teachers was quite pronounced, and each barely survived the semester – openly professing hatred for the profession and a willingness to quit. It is my belief that the support of their peers in the research cohort helped them to realize that these experiences were not "normal" and that teaching could be more fulfilling than that. Both of these participants went on to complete a second student teaching semester, and with the support of a mentor who expressed confidence in them as teachers, both became quite successful teachers as evidenced by glowing teacher evaluations from their mentors at semesters end.

Bigger picture

Fortunately, these examples of mentors creating untenable environments are rare and most of the participants openly admired and appreciated their mentors and the help that they were given on the road to becoming teachers and establishing positive relationships with their students. Student teachers, for the most part, have little experience to contextualize what they experience when they begin to teach. Commonly the participants would express confusion about the origin of their experiences, including whether they were the source of blame or whether the experience itself was normal. "Is it always like this?" and "Did they do well because of me?" are just two examples of comments made by participants that indicate a lack of awareness of the "bigger picture". The mentor plays a key role as the more "traveled" teacher who has a broader range of experience by which to contrast the immediate experiences of their neophyte counterparts. They need to be able to convey to their charge that what they are doing *is* special, or that it is not "that big of a deal" in the grand scheme of things. In short, they are there in part to contextualize

and normalize the experiences of the beginning teacher, and to perhaps offer some hints as to how to move on from that point.

Mentors have a valuable role to play in the student teacher relationship of beginning teachers. They influence both inservice as well as preservice teachers in so far as they establish class structure and rules for their student teachers to step into, help beginners interpret the signals they get from their classes, and make suggestions for what needs to be done to address specific circumstances that their student teachers may be encountering. The relationship between mentor and beginning teacher is not to the exclusive benefit of the prospective teacher though. Riggs and Sandlin (2002) describe how mentors benefit from the relationship as well. Aside from seeing material being taught in different and innovative ways, they also benefit from having to clarify for their attentive and motivated protégé, why they do what they did; that is, they are compelled to explain behaviors that often they themselves have come to consider as part of the "background behaviors" of teaching. By making many of their own actions explicit for another, they reconnect with many of the reasons they became teachers.

Summary

Mentors have both direct and indirect influence on the student teacher relationships of the beginning teachers they are paired with and thus many researchers believe that the mentor/protégé pairings need to be chosen with more than logistical concerns in mind. Some of the direct influence that mentors can have on the relationships of their charges include empowering the beginners to believe they are "the teacher", sharing a similar teaching approach and thus minimizing the transition impact from mentor to beginner, and directing effort to engage the beginning teacher with the relational aspects of teaching. Some of the negative influences a mentor can have include competing for the student teacher relationships or even undermining the teaching of the prospective teacher by not allowing them to prepare effectively for lessons. At the least, given their experience as teachers, the mentor is valuable for the beginning teacher in their capacity to normalize and contextualize the relationship experiences of the beginning teachers.

5.8) Beginning teachers distinguish between relationships, teaching and managing – a distinction that blurs with experience

Near the end of their first semester of student teaching, during one of our group meetings, I commented to the participants, "You seem to distinguish often between 'a relationship moment' and 'a management moment'- what is the difference?" Dan responded, "When it feels good it is a relationship moment, and when it feels bad or has conflict in it, it is a management moment." This response from Dan summarizes a pattern evident in the data – that beginning teachers tend to compartmentalize aspects of teaching, like management, relationship, and instruction. This pattern can be contrasted with that of their more experienced counterparts, who based on my experience, tend to see these as interconnected and interdependent. This compartmentalizing tendency by beginners has been described by other authors as well. Oberski et al. (1999) discussed how newly qualified teachers list 'relationships with pupils' as part of their achievements, but that 'discipline' is still a concern, as though the latter is wholly unrelated to the former. Weinstein (1998) also discussed this tendency in novice teachers to separate caring and order.

> These and other studies (e.g., Rust, 1992) suggest that novice teachers possess relatively narrow, dichotomous conceptions of both caring and order. Achieving order seems akin to authoritarianism, meanness and "bitchiness," while caring is defined in terms of nurturance, warmth, and empathy. (p. 155)

By conducting a longitudinal study I had access not only to the ideals and concerns of the participants as they began their preservice teaching, but I also observed evidence of change and progression in their skills as well as in their beliefs about teaching as they moved through their education program. It could be argued that education programs are actually designed to facilitate evolution in teachers. This category -- characterized by the tendency of beginning teachers to compartmentalize instruction, relationships and management – demonstrated a clear evolution on the part of the participants. I begin exploring this category with examples drawn from the data that indicate a tendency to view teaching as a series of separate activities; a form of reductionist "break it apart, and learn the pieces" attitude. I follow this with examples that provide some evidence of how this compartmentalization transitioned into a more holistic

awareness of the integrated nature of teaching. I have chosen to do this as a progression so that the reader can see some of the evolution of the participants over the course of the study. For the sake of clarity, I have summarized this progression in three stages; the compartmentalization stage, the transition stage and the holistic stage. Generally, this evolution emerged as a product of their experience, as can be seen in the changing conception of certain individuals over time. But, I would like to point out that a few of the participants did not undergo this 'separation to integration' progression, either because they continued to consider them to be separate by the study's end, or because they never did consider them to be separate – seeing the interrelatedness at the beginning.

Compartmentalization stage

When I observed Taylor teach – smiling, laughing, talking, etc. with his students both during and after class - it was clear that he genuinely enjoyed interacting with the students. Yet, in two different instances, when faced with conflict between him and his students, Taylor's strategy was to avoid the situation and wait for it to resolve itself. In one of these instances, the conflict resulted in the student calling Taylor "jerk" to his face – which Taylor promptly ignored and walked away from. Without realizing it, Taylor was creating a relationship with this boy that would shadow his interactions with him from that point forth as he later lamented in his journal. I spoke with Taylor about this incident after class and when asked why he chose to let the student call him "jerk", he responded, "I do not want to jeopardize my relationship with the class as a result of that one student." It is out of fear of jeopardizing his class relationship that he seems to be driven to avoid conflicts. Taylor did not see that both the 'good' and 'bad' all contribute to the perception the students have of him as the teacher.

Initially Abe began his student teaching by discriminating between relationships, managing, and teaching. He described how he did not have time for relationships because he needed to stay focused on the material he is teaching, and even tried to avoid "management problems" by "keeping them so busy they do not have time to screw around". Abe likens student teacher relationships to "making friends with your students" and he does not want to make the same 'make friends' mistake as other beginning teachers have.

> When you begin to enforce consequences, you undoubtedly are going to damage your relationship with students. But you need to consistently remember that the primary reason you are there is not to make friends with these students. (Abe)

Note how he describes teaching as making a choice between a relationship *or* management in the following quote.

> At this point as a first year teacher, you have one of two choices to make: Do I try to build a relationship with these students first and hope that this relationship with the students will pay off in the long run in terms of classroom management? Or, do I establish the fact that I am the boss, drill them with my expectations and rules, consistently apply these rules to everyone, and then slowly ease down in my strictness towards the students as the year progresses? (Abe)

In his journal, Abe ironically discussed how his mentor has far fewer management problems with a particular class than he does; adding in a seemingly unrelated entry, that his mentor had "a much better relationship with them than I do" (attributing the difference to his experience as a teacher and his history with the class). Abe does not see the connection between "better relationships" and "fewer management problems".

There are many other examples of the participants describing what Emily summarized as, "having no time while I am teaching to build relationships with my students". As a result, they tried to establish some connection with the students "outside of class". For some, the goal behind forming the relationship, even if it is outside of class, is to make managing the class easier, as in Dan's case, "if they like me they won't screw around." Similarly, Marie also admitted to building relationships outside of class, because she genuinely appreciated it when her teachers did so, and so tried as much possible to get to know her students now that she is the teacher. Whatever the motivation, by compartmentalizing teaching, managing, and building relationships, these beginners may be inadvertently sending mixed messages to their students; "This is who I am as a teacher, and this is who I am when I am not being the teacher".

This compartmentalization stage also seemed to include a tendency by the participants to interpret conflict with their students as personal attacks, provoking a more emotional response than they describe experiencing in later semesters. Christine, Dan and Jim all discuss moments in which they were in conflict with a student in their first

semester of teaching. In all three instances, they interpreted the actions and words of the students as a personal attack. Here is an example from Christine's journal:

> A few of the students were chatting and getting too noisy so I simply asked them to be quiet." During instructional time, it is my turn to talk. If they have questions, they must raise their hands." Damien, under his breath, said "Wow, Miss B's being a bitch today.

Christine goes on to describe how she was hurt by this statement and that she had not expected it from a student with whom she thought she had a 'good' relationship.

It did not take long, however, for the participants to begin to describe a connection between what they were doing under the 'management', 'teaching' and 'relationship' banners. It is when they begin to see these as interrelated that the participants seem to enter the next stage – the transition stage.

Transition stage

The transition stage is the stage at which the participants began to see connection between aspects of teaching that they had either considered to be separate, or at least, treated as separate until they felt they had gained some facility with them. It was notable how often they expressed outright surprise when they 'discovered' the connection. Emily, in the following quote, describes one of the instances that led her to the conclusion that classroom management and student teacher relationship are not mutually exclusive:

> Having the kids on your side helps. In December I had a huge fight with a grade 7 girl. We basically clashed on an issue and both got really upset. The next day, I decided to apologize for getting so angry and let her know calmly how her behavior affects me. She surprised me by apologizing also and has been more or less cooperative ever since. We still have our battles but she cooperates a bit more than she used to.

Similarly, Abe expressed surprise during one of our group meetings that "although I have been extremely firm with my Chemistry students, they still seem to respect me and ask a lot of questions during seatwork." He expected his firmness would be at the expense of his relationship with the students, and was surprised to learn that it was not. After this revelation from Abe, the participants began to discuss other incidences of how, even though they were strict or "bad-ass", the students still respected them afterwards. Some even concluded that they were respected by the students *because* they had a willingness

to enforce expectations. The participants were coming to the conclusion that classroom management and relationship were not exclusive, but could actually help each other. Abe continued to find connections between management and student teacher relationships and as he insinuates in the following quote, has made some form of peace with his willingness to be strict, no longer believing it be always at the expense of his relationships;

> Now, you would think with what I have told you that these kids would probably hate me for being so strict. However, the students get really excited when they see me in the hallway or when I visit them in their other classes. (Abe)

Holistic stage

I define the holistic stage as the stage in which the participants attributed their actions and behaviors toward the purpose of building a relationship, for example, but expected their actions to have implications for other pedagogical aspects, like management. In some cases they even described counting on what Ben has called the "ripple effect". In this example from Emily, note how her solution for what she describes as a 'management issue' is to seek "good rapport" – a relationship orientation. "I feel as though I would need a good rapport with my students to minimize management issues." In perhaps the best example from the participants of an individual marking his transition from compartmentalization to holistic integration is this quote from Abe. In it he is actually speaking back to the research group through his journal (rhetorically of course, since they do not read each other's journals) with what reads almost as disdain for some of their comments; seemingly unaware that he himself underwent any transition at all.

> What I was trying to get at though, is that some teachers make the mistake of thinking they can manage their classroom solely based on initially establishing a good relationship with their students. To quote someone, "If you love them to death, they will love you back". Unfortunately, it just doesn't work that way. Some people might observe misbehavior, but choose to let it slide because they think disciplining will lead to the breakdown of the relationship. But in fact, choosing to react to certain misbehaviors might actually work to strengthen the relationship because the students won't see you as a pushover. They might not like you, but they will respect the fact that you are willing to lay down the law.

There are many more examples of the participants describing the integration of their student teacher relationships, management, and instruction. Steven described how he always made certain to tell the students whom he is disciplining that he "still thinks they are good kids", overtly attempting to build relationships with his students through his management of them. Jim talks about how his instruction and management are being well received and that he believes that is really helping to cultivate relationships with his students. It is worth noting, however, that almost without exception, the data indicating a more holistic approach to management, instruction, and relationship did not emerge until later in their programs, after they had some experience as teachers. For some this was during their second student teaching practicum, for others it wasn't until they were inservice teachers, as in Abe's case. Apparently, these beginning teachers required time and the experience of seeing one aspect of their teaching influence the other aspects.

It is somewhat artificial to so neatly break the progression of the participants described above into three categories as I have. It is artificial because, although originating in the data, the quotes have been chosen to illustrate an observed pattern in the participants. There are instances in which participants would contradict this progression with statements that still indicated a compartmentalization approach in which they describe realizing relationships, instruction and management are interconnected. Their progression did not happen irrevocably or overnight; it would be better described as following a pattern of "two steps forward, one step back". Nonetheless, this pattern is not unique to this study. In a study of professional growth in beginning teachers, Kagan (1992) indicates a progression in the beginning teachers he studied that is remarkably similar to the progression described above. Kagan (1992) describes how novice teachers begin as idealists, they are confronted with harsh classroom 'realities', become disillusioned, and subsequently become authoritarian or focused on classroom control and how their own actions may be the cause of the problem or the solution.

> The reality of the classroom rarely conforms to novice's expectation or images; instead, most novice teachers confront pupils who have little academic motivation and interest and a tendency to misbehave. Quickly disillusioned and possessing inadequate procedural knowledge, novice teachers tend to grow increasingly authoritarian and custodial. Obsessed with classroom control, novices may also begin to plan instruction designed, not to promote learning, but to discourage misbehavior. This shift in

> attitudes and concerns among novices completing student teaching and extended classroom practica has been documented in prior empirical research (e.g., Glassberg & Sprinthall, 1980; Hoy, 1967, 1968, 1969; Hoy & Rees, 1977; Jones, 1982). Their inadequate knowledge of classroom procedures also appears to prevent novice teachers from focusing on what pupils are learning from academic tasks. Instead, working memory is devoted to monitoring their own behavior as they attempt to imitate or invent workable procedures. (p. 145)

Kagan concluded that the *only* solution for these novice teachers is to standardize classroom procedures and to integrate management and instruction – only then will it allow them to focus on the pupil's behavior instead of their own. I would argue that my participants were motivated to integrate management, relationship, and instruction more by insight (discovered the connections) or facility (made their jobs easier) than the more deterministic, survival driven tone of Kagan's conclusions. Nonetheless, the beginning teachers in his study seemed to undergo a similar progression. Oberski et al. (1999) similarly described how their participants' original intent was to form relationships with their pupils, but that quickly reformed itself into a focus on establishing order and control.

In this category I have portrayed the participants as though they all underwent a similar progression. I would like to note, however, that not all of the participants did so, and those that evidently did, did not do so at the same rate. I would like to conclude this category with a brief discussion of the exceptions to the generalizations that have been made in this category. First, not all of the participants in this study demonstrated a progression from seeing teaching, managing, and relationships as separate to treating them as integrated and interrelated. Phil for instance, even after his first year of teaching still presented an dual nature to his students. He would assume a controlling, strict, serious "game face" while teaching, but a relaxed, joking and smiling presence before and after class. He is an example of a beginning teacher who, for the most part, still has not connected with students when he is teaching. By contrast, Doug was a participant who 'got it' right from the beginning; integrating instruction, management, and relationship throughout each of his practica. If Doug went through a progression of some kind, it was before he became a preservice teacher. Doug even described frustration that

the school climate was forcing him to be more "management oriented" than he felt he needed to be, thus greatly diminishing his desire to be a teacher.

Second, the participants were not consistent in their approach to the different classes they were teaching each semester. Different classes created different priorities. Marie, for instance, discussed how when she taught her junior high science classes as a substitute teacher she was overtly controlling in those environments. When she taught her Biology 30 night class, she was much more relaxed and tended toward "giving my students the benefit of the doubt". Christine actually described frustration that she had to continually learn how to deal with each class separately, and that she couldn't apply the techniques she learned in her grade 10 math class to some of the other classes she taught. Britzman (2003) ascribed this to a search by prospective teachers for:

> Practical things, automatic and generic methods for immediate classroom application. They bring to their teacher education a search for recipes and, often, a dominant concern with methods of classroom discipline, because they are quite familiar with the teacher's role as social controller. (p. 63)

Nonetheless, there were enough data to suggest that the participants , for the most part, did typically start out compartmentalizing the different aspects of teaching and with experience begin to "discover" that instructing, managing, and relating to the students in their classes are interconnected and cannot be approached separately.

Summary

Prospective teachers recognize that successful teaching requires skill with many different components of teaching. Three of these components are management of the class, instruction of the curricular content, and building relationships with the students. Unfortunately, the majority of the participants tended to compartmentalize these aspects, and attempt to learn and employ them separately. As these beginning teachers gained experience, the integrated nature of these components became apparent and eventually their teaching reflected an awareness of this interconnectedness.

5.9) Motivation for student teacher relationships

"How does a relationship between a teacher and a student come into being?" This was a question asked by one of the participants during a group meeting. I could argue that this is a question that could be asked of any relationship that we create in our lives, but given the focus of this research and the participant's involvement in it, how to form relationships with their students is a 'good' question. This question was followed by a brief discussion by the participants of time investment, proximity to teachers' desk, and involvement in extra-curricular programs. However, with the plethora of 'ways' being tabled, one of the participants threw his hands in the air and asked, "Why do we even need to bother forming relationships with our students?" This is the crux of this category. Of what value is the student teacher relationship to the participants and thus what are their intentions for going through what they do to create it? To make matters even more complicated, teachers are subjected to mixed messages regarding the value of relationships and what is the teacher's place in that process. In other words, why should a teacher create relationships with their students? On the one hand, they are told that relationships are important and "make teaching worthwhile" from more humanistically oriented individuals who place efficacious value on the student teacher relationship. Others, like the participants' classroom management instructor, stress the importance of the student teacher relationship for improving the control and management of the classroom environment (as was discussed in the last category). There is a third message, from individuals more concerned with risk and liability, that suggest teachers ensure distance between themselves and their students, as can be seen in this quote from Mawhinney and Sagan (2007).

> Teachers and administrators are often directed to distance themselves from children in order to avoid the risks of personal relationships. As Hargreaves notes, "The dilemma for teachers is that although they are supposed to care for their students, they are expected to do so in a clinical and detached way - to mask their emotions. (p. 464)

It is thus not surprising that the participants themselves demonstrated a range of approaches to the student teacher relationship. 'Approaches' in this context could mean either the techniques they used to foster the relationship, or what the participants' motivations or intentions were for the student teacher relationship. Both were evident in

the data, but in this category I focus on the intentions of the participants, not the techniques they used.

Generally speaking, the participants could be described as approaching student teacher relationships with one of two intentions. The majority of the time the participants approached student teacher relationships as a tool to be used to foster another of their goals. Emily, as an example would greet her students at the door as they entered class, because as she explains "It is a good relationship building opportunity meeting them at the door. It shows I care and hopefully decreases the chances that they will want to screw around in my class. I have to do this though; I am not very good at forming relationships with them during class." Emily is using this 'relationship moment' to help her manage her class – it is a tool. The second intention seems to be a genuine concern or value for the relationships they have with their students from a personal standpoint. In other words, the relationship itself is the goal; they genuinely care for their students and in the process gain an efficacious value from the relationship. Again, using an example from Emily's journal, she reflects on the personal value she derived from a telephone conversation she had with a parent:

> She told me that her son has never liked a teacher more than me and that he feels comfortable talking to me and telling me things he won't tell anyone at all. It really touched be because I had no idea we had created this bond. I cherish it.

As inadvertent as the relationship apparently was, it gave both Emily and her student something of more personal value.

There was some evidence of a third intention in the data as well, as taken from a single instance in which Phil was discussing his approach to teaching one of his high school classes during his first semester as an inservice teacher. He commented "I do not want a relationship with the students right now. I am not a good enough teacher yet to embrace a relationship and know what the warning signs are if they go bad. I have my whole career ahead of me. Maybe next year when I have a better handle on some of the other parts of my teaching I can spend more time and energy on forming and maintaining relationships with my students. Right now though, I just don't want to risk it." This was the only instance I found in the data in which a participant directly commented on how

his relationships were being driven by a fear of professional liability. However, because this concern was not commonly found in the data, it will not be discussed any further.

As mentioned above, the majority of the examples in the data that described the participants' intention for their student teacher relationships attribute an ulterior motive for fostering the relationship. Note how in each of the following examples, the participant is 'creating' a relationship moment deliberately, and how in each instance the motivation for doing this seems to be directed at controlling the situation, more than caring for the students.

- "I want to get a connection to more and more students from this class; I believe discipline problems will go down. To try, I will bring in sports/hockey questions into math class to make relevant to students. I believe this is the most important facet of teaching to allow for student learning in all classes." In this example Ben would like to improve his student connection to his classes and the material to facilitate classroom management and learning, so he is using his 'connection' to the students to increase the relevance of his materials by using examples drawn from his students lives. Ben also mentions how he actually keeps track of which students he speaks with each lesson, and tries to make sure he speaks to every student at least once – again with a full understanding that he is improving the management and instruction of his class by doing so.

- Abe prioritizes content delivery above the other aspects of teaching, but recognizes that teaching needs to be more than only that. Additionally, he admits he is a bit awkward at creating relationships with his students. A strategy that he has employed to foster relationships with his students is to reflect on his lesson posthumously and determine who he needs to interact with next time – so as to not "miss anyone". He jokes that these interactions are almost part of his lesson plan. This 'interaction by deliberation' allows Abe to convey to his students that he is making an attempt to reach them all – even if it is for no other reason than to determine how they are doing with the material. Abe put into place a mechanism that allowed him to gain comfort with interpersonal interactions, something that he struggled with, in order to provide relationship opportunities he might have missed otherwise.

Christine is an example of a participant who seemed literally driven to create a relationship with her students. But for Christine, this is not because she seeks to ease her classroom management, or foster her instruction although these are likely outcomes of her interactions as well. Christine simply cares deeply for people – and her students are no exception to that rule. In any number of different instances Christine demonstrated a

willingness to share her own life with her students and in response, more often then not her students responded in kind.

> It hurts me so much to see so many young children in so many horrible situations. I wish I could help all of them. I wish I could give everyone of them a hug and make everything all right.

Christine has admitted that she has made herself more vulnerable as a result of her tendency to embrace the more personal aspects of her student teacher relationship, but "wouldn't trade that for the world", since connecting to her students gives such "joy".

The intentions for a teacher's relationship with his/her students do not have to be exclusively caring or driven by an ulterior motive; intentions are not mutually exclusive as can be seen in this quote from Ben. He recognizes the value of the student teacher relationship for enhancing student learning and classroom management, but also recognized that the students may be benefiting on a more personal level as well.

> My purpose for these relationships is to enhance classroom management and student learning. Also as a human being, I believe good relationships are necessary for me and the students. For some kids the relationship they have with me might be the only positive adult relationship they have in their lives.

Let's step away from the classroom and the participants for a moment and consider a hypothetical example. Each of us has a number of relationships in our personal and professional lives. Each one is unique and would be characterized differently. What if you learned that one of these relationships that is important to you, was driven by the other person because they wanted to manipulate you to do something they needed you to do? Maybe a friend is using you to gain access to a facility they would not have access to otherwise. How would you receive this information? Would you still continue to be their friend? To bring this hypothetical example back to the participants in this research; what would be the expected reception if/when the students of the participants learn that the participants' relationship with them is driven *only* by their desire to manage the classroom more effectively? I would suspect one of two reactions. Either, the students would act to end or alter the relationship, or the students would seek to use the teacher right back.

During one of the group meetings, a few of the participants described how some of their students seemed to embrace and seek a relationship with the teacher, but that they suspected it was in an attempt to "use them" in some way. Is the 'shoe on the other foot' perhaps? Steven related the following instances in his journal regarding one of his students who was coded 'Severe for behavior'. It demonstrates how the students' perception of the teacher's intention for the student teacher relationship may be significant and subsequently reacted to by the student. These journal entries occurred on different days and are in order.

> I saw M walking the halls with his head hung low, I asked him what was wrong but he was kind of in another zone. My mentor warned me about M's moods, so I figured this may be a good opportunity to try and build a relationship with him. Of course, I got some candy and that got his attention. I sat down on the hallway floor with him, at his height and asked him why he was kicked out of class. He gave me his side of the story, which I'm sure was exaggerated, I gave him my point of view, then we began talking about snowboarding, mountain biking, and skateboarding. Apparently we have a lot of things in common! By the end of our conversation (~15minutes), he was relatively happy and even gave a couple smiles.
>
> M and I are still all right, I hope anyway. He's the last person I want against me (M is coded Severe for behavior).
>
> I have used the "buddy approach" to try to get on his side and build a positive student teacher relationship with him. I think he now realizes why I sat down next to him, however, and it has backfired. He now thinks he can take advantage of me and do what he wants.

Has M come to the conclusion that he was being manipulated by Steven and thus has decided to respond in kind?

It has been my experience as a teacher that students know that you have certain obligations; instructing and managing the class are some of them. They do not resent the role of the relationship in that process as long as it is accompanied by a genuine concern and investment by the teacher in the relationship for reasons beyond "making the job easier or more effective". There *needs* to be a personal component to the relationship between teacher and student-- not friendship per se, more closely resembling genuine caring and concern for the other. The importance of 'genuineness' is asserted by Mawhinney and Sagan (2007) in the following quote as well.

> We also support those teachers who allow their students to know them. Teachers who offer their students "genuineness and self-disclosure" reveal "aspects or themselves that allow [the] image or authority figure to be tempered by images of teacher-as-a-real-person" (Dufour and Eaker, 1987). Steven Wolk (2003) believes that "teachers need to allow students to see them as complete people with emotions, opinions, and lives outside of school. A good way for a teacher to get students to treat him or her as a human being is to act like one. (p. 461)

Once again, beginning teachers are caught between becoming a teacher and everything they imagine that entails, while simultaneously being acknowledged to be "only human" – with emotional reactions, vulnerabilities and goals of their own. One of the ways that may allow them to do this is to be honest with their students, make their intentions transparent and acknowledge the "humanness" of their students as well. Students 'get it' if they are given enough credit to do so.

Summary

The participants' intentions for their student teacher relationships influence the relationships that result. The majority of the time, the relationship was used as a tool by the participants in order to facilitate the other aspects of teaching like instruction or management. Some of the time, however, the student teacher relationship was pursued for reasons more closely resembling caring and the personal satisfaction it afforded. These intentions are not mutually exclusive, however, and the students could be seen to react not only to what the participants did to create and maintain the relationship, but also, at times, to their intentions for doing so.

5.10) Relationships mediate student and teacher limits

Junior and senior high school pupils have a great sense of what a teacher is "supposed to be"; the product of years of different teachers at different levels and in different subjects. This archetype is not static within or across contexts, but teachers who operate outside of this 'norm' typically are challenged more by the students than those teachers who reinforce students' expectations of what a teacher is "supposed to be". Students expect their teacher to enforce the "line" (the point at which the student has gone too far and can

be expected to be disciplined by the teacher), and every participant in this study at some point referenced being "tested" by their students.

During an observation of a junior high science class taught by Emily in her first inservice semester, I sat at the teacher's desk at the back of the room. Inadvertently, this was quite close to a student, who I would later learn, was a "handful" for Emily during most lessons. For pretty much the entire lesson my presence near this student was driving him crazy – he continually looked in my direction in obvious discomfort, and since Emily did not introduce me to the class, he did not know who I was or what I was doing there – only that I was an adult sitting right next to him taking a lot of notes. Finally, near the end of class he could take it no more, and he approached me and asked who I was. Emily overheard this question, so I winked at her and with a straight face replied "I had heard there was some trouble in this class and so I am here to observe you and the rest of your class." To which he replied, "That's ok, I have been good today." We eventually came clean that I was there to observe Emily teach, and shortly thereafter Emily informed me that this student was a "nice kid" but he just couldn't sit still and made her classroom management a "nightmare" at times. What is notable about this moment though, is that this student has a very clear idea of what being 'good' and being 'bad' are, and that he had *chosen* to be 'good' that day. In other words, he knew where the line was, and perhaps because of my presence that day, had chosen not to cross it. These quotes drawn from Christine and Steven's journals also indicate how their students tested them despite knowing where the line was.

> I am so tired of telling everyone to sit down, be quiet, etc. Today I think I have said it more than 100 times. LOL. I finally decided to change my method. They already know that if I am in the front of the class they are supposed to be quiet. I sat in the front and started whispering the answers to the worksheet at the end of class, within 3 seconds everyone was quiet and you could hear a pin-drop. They knew exactly what they were supposed to do. (Christine)

> Today Colton was drinking on the couch right in front of me (obviously testing me), I told him no drinking or eating allowed on the couch. What does he do? He tries to take a big swig before putting it away! So I took the drink away from him. Opposed to how he reacted a couple of days ago when I took the ketchup chips away from him, he respected me more today, and took the punishment with very little complaining. (Steven)

No one ever explicitly teaches a beginning teacher where the line is; you cannot, because the line is different across different contexts. Yet parents, administration, experienced teachers and even students expect teachers, including beginning teachers, to enforce it. An awareness of the line comes from a range of different origins; school guidelines, advice from experienced teachers and university instructors, personal experience and even personal comfort level. For instance, as a teacher and university instructor, I advise my students to be "firm, fair and consistent" – an approach that has helped when maintaining a line with my students. It is a truism to say that beginning teachers are beginners and thus are typically more malleable than their experienced colleagues as they seek to establish levels of acceptability for themselves. The students, also aware of this malleability, seek to find opportunity for themselves by testing beginning teachers more than they might a more established teacher. What I would like to discuss now is the role of the student teacher relationship in this testing and line establishing "dance" that beginning teachers and their students perform.

The student teacher relationship encompasses many aspects. It includes patterns of interaction, emotional responses to situations and even how different contexts and situations are perceived. It should be no surprise, that where the line is, how the students push it, and how the actions of the teacher influence it, would all be influenced by the relationship teachers have with their students. The relationship may, for instance, reduce the willingness of the students to push the limits of the teacher, as Tim hoped when he sought to create friendships between himself and his students. "They will like me so much they won't even dare to even think of misbehaving." Or it may open the teacher up to abuse as the students gain an increased awareness of how to get to the teacher; the outcome Tim describes being the result of his "kill them with kindness" intention. There were a few instances of the participants avoiding conflict situations as a result of their positive relationships with their students. Christine, as an example, talked about how her students did not give her as hard a time as they seemed to give her mentor teacher. To her, it seemed like she did not have to enforce the line as often as her mentor did. However, there are many more instances in which the participants described being tested more often than their mentors – their frame of reference for "experienced teacher".

During a computer lesson, in his second preservice semester, Phil was responding to an inordinate number of simple questions for which the students knew the answer. It wasn't until his mentor called the class on it, and pointed out that they were just trying to make Phil waste time by "asking stupid questions" that the behavior stopped (chuckling that it was the mentor that figured it out, not Phil). The students in this class had figured out that Phil could be easily distracted from the purpose of the lesson through questioning – an example of the student teacher relationship giving the students the information they needed to push the limits. Another example of the students abusing their relationship with the participant can be found in Steven's journal. His students had learned that Steven could be convinced of their unfortunate circumstances more readily than the mentor. Thus they attempted to use Steven as a mediator between them and the mentor regarding a poor quiz result.

> I'm thinking about asking Mr. B. for a possible rewrite of the quiz. Some of the students told me that they would study and learn the material if they were given a second chance.

Steven originally was more willing to give the students the benefit of the doubt than his mentor, a willingness the students picked up on. This willingness quickly diminished, however, as Steven began to suspect his attempts at creating a relationship with his students was making him vulnerable to abuse - something I touch upon later in this category.

The student teacher relationship also increases the perceptivity of the beginning teachers regarding their students. Note how in the following quote from Jim, his awareness of a student has allowed him to "read" the situation more accurately and mediate his enforcement of the line more subtly; that is, he is not just reacting in response to a behavior but instead is choosing a course of action that will best send an intended message to this particular student.

> On a behavior note, Justin. Today he seemed back to his usual tricks. He wasn't giving me attitude so much as being very chatty and distracted. This is a more mild issue than we originally dealt with (attitude) so I am hesitant to overreact, however, I know this could lead to something more serious. I think it is best that I hammer down on him hard to show that I mean business. (Jim)

Ben also talks about how his improved relationship with his students increased his awareness of what their actions "really mean", recognizing that the students "are testing my boundaries more as well".

The participants were not oblivious to their reception by the students – they could remember how they treated the student teachers they had when they were the students. Thus, in many ways they expected to be given a harder time by the students than the mentors they were replacing, and for the most part, this expectation was borne out. This expectation coupled with their lack of experience created a unique circumstance for the participants. Beginning teachers have all sorts of intentions and hopes as they begin teaching, some of which are realized. One of the goals common to the participants (perhaps the reason they volunteered for this research) was to create 'good' relationships with their students. It was interesting though, that even when they experienced a relationship moment they would describe as positive, often they continued to wonder if it was actually the student attempting to use the relationship as a way to take advantage of the beginning teacher. Their lack of experience denied them the context needed in order to judge the authenticity of the interactions originating with the students. Given their own memories of mistreating student teachers, they would often interpret situations between them and their students "with a grain of salt". In a testimony to the last category which established significance to the motivations for the interactions between student and teacher, Steven and Abe both questioned the authenticity of the students' responses to their actions – suspecting the students were attempting to manipulate them. In both of these instances, Steven and Abe's solution was to retreat back into the power of the teacher, and "be strict", just to be safe.

> I assumed many of them tried to avoid doing their work by speaking with me. (Abe)

> I can sense the students are feeling more comfortable around me. I no longer have to try too hard to talk to them; they are now coming up to me. T and C respect me more; however, T is still in the process of testing me. C bought me a doughnut today! I'm going to have to be a little stricter with T though, or I think he'll start trying to take advantage of me. (Steven)

When I was a mentor, I remember an incident in which a student teacher was quite proud of herself for how often her students were asking her to come over and help them at their

desks – she believed she was finally being embraced as a teacher by the boys in her remedial science class. As luck would have it, I overheard some of the boys from her class later during lunch supervision talking about how they were able to look down the student teacher's shirt when she bent over their desks to help them. Perhaps these beginners have cause to be paranoid. Students know that they can get more from any teacher if they are the "teacher's pet" not the "teacher's enemy". It is the process of acting on their interpretations of their students' actions and then dealing with the outcomes (in other words, gaining experience) that ultimately seems to give teachers the ability to better judge the impact of enforcing the line and the authenticity of their student teacher relationships in that process.

The student teacher relationship also acted as a moderating factor in establishing the limits of acceptability for students – the line. It moderated the impact of the correction the teachers were "forced" to implement (a 'good' relationship between student and teacher diminishes the perception of harm to the relationship as the result of conflict between student and teacher). The relationship increased the teachers' sensitivity to choose actions that were appropriate responses to the situation; and, the relationship created a willingness in both the student and teacher to give the other "the benefit of the doubt". Kelly's second student teaching semester made a wonderful example of how being given the benefit of the doubt by the students completely changes the need to enforce the line in a class. Kelly began this practicum quite insecure in her role as a teacher and coupled with a lack of support by her mentor, quickly reduced her relationship with a particular class to an antagonistic one. Kelly described teaching the class as "going to war on a daily basis". Kelly literally was questioning every outcome in the class and wondered whether the negative tone of the class "is really her fault". After observing her, it became apparent that, whether it was her fault or not, the students were quite prepared to give her the responsibility for the failure. Kelly had become so insecure that by default whenever she responded to a question or point from a student she would begin "I am sorry…" - essentially conveying that it was her fault (thus a need to apologize) for any misunderstanding, stoppage, clarity, and so forth. Of course, the students were happy letting her take the blame, and began openly berating her and pushing this willingness from Kelly to assume blame for everything – they were way

over the line, but still Kelly placed no accountability onto the students. As Eric Hoffer (1966) discussed in his work on mass movements, groups are quite willing to shed accountability for their actions and place the blame for their lack of success on another.

> A mass movement attracts and holds a following not because it can satisfy the desire for self-advancement, but because it can satisfy the passion for self-renunciation. (p. 21)

Unfortunately, Kelly's situation quickly regressed into an untenable situation and she was transferred into a different class with a different mentor. Kelly has learned some valuable lessons in the process, and in the new class she embraced her role as a teacher, began to enforce expectations (the line), and the relationship she developed with that class and its students was completely different. Even though at times she continued to make mistakes, because she was more respected as the teacher, the students had a willingness to overlook some of the mistakes, which had they happened in the previous class, would have been cause to make teaching tough for Kelly.

The student teacher relationship helped to create and moderate what is acceptable in class, but it was also created by where and if the beginning teacher drew the line. The participants who described either stringent, militaristic enforcement of expectations regardless of circumstance, or those that never enforced expectations at all, consistently described more difficulties in their relationships with students. The student teacher relationships not only helped in the creation and maintenance of the line, but also, the relationship was partly defined by the teacher's willingness to set and hold students accountable to an expectation. The participants who accepted that they were teachers, and sought to create and enforce limits for their students, described resulting student teacher relationship experiences that were more positive than those who had difficulty with establishing a line for their students.

Summary

Students testing the teacher's tolerance for misbehavior are daily classroom phenomenons. Students expect their teachers to set clear expectations and do so on a consistent basis. The student teacher relationship has a role to play in the establishing and interpreting of this line by both students and teachers. Students may be less willing to

push the line as a result of the relationship, but it also equips the students to better know how to push the teachers' buttons. Fortunately for teachers, the student teacher relationship may also increase their perceptivity in classroom situations as well as give them more options when having to discipline students who have crossed the line. Additionally, the student teacher relationship can help to moderate the enforcement of the line by allowing the teachers some leeway that they might not otherwise have in a more antagonistic environment. Ironically, the student teacher relationship may be partly defined by the teachers' willingness to enforce the line, and thus although enforcement of the line can involve conflict, in the long run, the teachers and students both benefit.

5.11) Time

Teaching requires subtleties of perception, interaction and instruction, and gaining facility with these skills is a process that takes time. Individuals can have many qualities that would make them great teachers, but it takes years for a teacher to become a master teacher. The relationships between students and teachers also take time. Rarely would either the teacher or the student say they have a 'good' relationship with the other without significant time and interaction having taken place.

This study featured time as one of the fundamentals in its design; it is a longitudinal study. Thus, the participants were followed as they progressed as teachers across successively longer practica and into inservice teaching. It is no surprise to me that the participants featured time as a significant factor in their relationships with their students. One of the most obvious differences from semester to semester was the amount of contact time they had with their students. After all, in their first practicum they spent four consecutive weeks student teaching, in their second practicum they spent nine weeks and as inservice teachers they were the teacher from day one. Upon review of the data, the participants tended to discuss time as it related to their relationships in two ways. First, they described the influence that the length of their tenure at each school had on the relationships they developed. Second, the amount of time they had on any given day to prepare, teach and interact with students also had an influence on their student teacher relationships.

Generally speaking, the participants found time constraints to be a stressful, motivating, and efficiency generating process. Ben talks about how the lack of time in his day as an inservice teacher forced him to find efficiencies in his day, that when he was student teaching he did not have to do. He described finding shortcuts in lesson planning, material review, and even in the marking of assignments – often getting the students to mark them in class so that he did not have to take the time. Unfortunately, he also felt he had no time to "just chat" with students anymore and thus believed his relationships were suffering. For Ben this loss of relationship time with his students is enough for him to question if teaching is what he really wants to do, since a 'good' relationship with his students was a primary motivation for Ben to go into education in the first place. Constraints reducing the time for relationships were a concern of other participants as well. During a group meeting in their second student teaching semester, many of the participants described having no time to build relationships – they were barely getting the essential things a teacher does done. This suggested that the participants considered their relationships with their students as "an extra", not an essential, and that to build relationships required conscious effort. Emily extended this thought by describing her student teacher relationships as an obstacle to her efficiency since they were distracting and took time away from the other things she *had* to do.

The majority of the data connecting time and student teacher relationships focused on the overall length of the practica or inservice teaching. However, there were some data that contrasted the amount of time they had in a *day* to form relationships. Unlike the trend to favor longer periods of time when the goal was to form relationships with their students (thus favoring inservice teaching or later practica over earlier ones), when the participants considered the amount of time in their day, they tended to favor teaching scenarios that freed them up to complete responsibilities other than just teaching. For instance, Phil claimed that although he had a significant amount to learn as an inservice teacher, because he had a half-time teaching load he had enough time to "prep, mark and reflect on what is happening", and thus was content. Similarly, Abe was given a reduced load in his first semester as an inservice teacher (teaching only three out of eight blocks in a day) which he described was "essential in order to adapt to the stresses of living on my own for the first time and adjusting to the increased responsibilities of being an actual

teacher." In a rare instance of lamenting his earlier days of teaching (his first practicum), Jim described his relationship with his students as "an aberration of the extra time I had in my first practicum, and once I am teaching for 'real' that will diminish." Being given additional time during the first few years of inservice teaching, the "induction period", unfortunately is a rarity in North America. Britton et al. (2003) describe how unlike most countries, New Zealand has made it a requirement that teachers be given additional time during their induction period to further incorporate and master different aspects of teaching, and to gain some facility with the culture of the specific school where they are working. They describe how this additional time is often the difference between teachers staying in the profession instead of abandoning it in favor of less intensive careers. Clearly time is a significant factor for beginning teachers.

Nonetheless, the majority of the data related to time and the student teacher relationship pointed to the overall length of their tenure at each school as the most meaningful time related factor. The remainder of this category focuses on the data informing this connection.

Short term

One of the strategies I use as a runner to achieve greater and greater distances is to break a big distance into smaller more realizable goals. So instead of a marathon being 42.2 kilometers, it is actually just 24 little ten minute runs all connected together. Conceptually I am not running the whole marathon; I am just running until the end of the next little ten minute section. For the most part, the participants entering the first student teaching practicum had very little awareness of, or ability with, the various tasks that make up being a teacher. Tasks that a more experienced teacher took for granted and took relatively little time to do, were, for these beginners, requiring much more time and thought. To connect to the running analogy above, they were able to commit to this investment because they came to conceptualize what they were going through as finite – they only had to survive four weeks and then the first stage would be over. Ben, Dan, Tim and Kelly all mentioned that if their first student teaching practicum had been any longer, they did not know if they would have made it. Since the practicum was defined and relatively short in duration, they exerted themselves at a level that they would not

have been able to sustain for much longer than that. This quote from Tim summarized that only by knowing his exertions would soon was he motivated to continue.

> K is trying to pawn another class on me. This is hardly good news as I feel like I want to quit already. Despite my feelings I'm going to go hard until the end and get things under control.

Even though the short term placements described above allowed some of the participants to "make it", teaching, and interacting with students for only four weeks is not "normal" (four weeks was the duration of the participants' first student teaching practicum). A typical school year is approximately 40 weeks, and although giving these neophyte teachers a limited first exposure to teaching is an intended goal of their education programs, the participants, their mentors and their students all knew that they were the teacher for only a short time. At one point Jim even described the first practicum as "an aberration; it is not real teaching". Thus a deep personal investment in the school and their students was not typically the approach taken by the participants, and this impacted the relationships between the participants and their students. Marie described not being taken seriously by the students. Steven's students actually asked him to stop trying to build relationships with them and just get on with the material since he was there for only a few more weeks anyway. Kelly and Marie described how they learned something that was negatively influencing their teaching, but that they would try to incorporate that in the next semester since there was not enough time left in their current practicum to make changes.

Jim found that the short duration of the first practicum denied him the context he needed to teach effective lessons. "Right now I am simply scrambling to figure out how they were taught something months ago just to teach them a new concept today." Since he had not taught them previously, what the students needed to understand the lessons he was preparing, he could not gauge their prior learning, or how he could frame it in a way that connected to what they had learned before. Thus, he felt disconnected from the students and was making his "best guess" as to how to make connections. Additionally, Jim felt that he was being unduly pressured in his short term student teaching capacity, because he was being evaluated on his teaching, and having a 'bad' day or week when

there are so few days and weeks in the first place is interpreted differently than a 'bad' day in the context of a whole school year.

Clarridge and Berliner (1991) worked with experienced teachers, but placed them into short-term teaching assignments in an attempt to determine the role that experience played during short-term teaching assignments – as is typical of preservice education early practica. They reported that the experienced teachers behaved differently than when in their own classes because "they did not know the rules for these students and because the one-time aspect removed the need to set a precedent" (p. 6). Clarridge and Berliner concluded that the length of practicum had as much to do with the relative success of a teacher in that environment as did the experience of the teacher. Short-term placements allowed an exposure to teaching, but as genuine simulations of teaching, they are not as effective.

Elliott et al. (1999) described how teachers working in short term placements suffer from "pleasing guest syndrome". They stated that long practica are superior because it allows preservice teachers to "authentically engage in all aspects of teaching". Teachers are given the ability to set classroom procedures and routines, develop the learning environment, and observe the development of student learning over time. Abe talked about being frustrated by some of these shortcomings in his first student teaching semester, describing how he would not even be able to attend parent-teacher interviews, since he hadn't been the teacher long enough to have anything to say about the students or their marks. Thus, even though a few, including Christine, felt invested in their students and schools during their early practica, the majority of the participants described how the limited time they had in their first practicum was a significant impediment to their teaching and more specifically, to their relationships with the students.

Long term

After completing their first four week student teaching practicum, as a part of their preservice education program, the participants were required to complete a second nine week student teaching practicum in a successive semester. Interestingly, even though this practicum was only nine weeks, much closer in length to their first practicum than the 40 weeks that make up a full year, the participants more often likened their experiences to

that of an inservice teacher than what they experienced during their first semester. This seemed to be because their frames of reference were similar in both their second student teaching practicum and their first inservice teaching year but they had more time. Thus, they had more options than they had in their previous semester.

Abe talked about how the number of his "pretty good" and "great" days went up the longer he had to teach the kids. He believed it was because his awareness of the students was improving and thus the quality of his lessons was as well. Doug related that his involvement level with his classes went way up once he was given enough time for him to feel like he could "take ownership" for his students. He felt like he had spent enough time with the students to give and gain trust, and respect. He believed that he had relationships with his students as compared with his first student teaching semester. Phil described that he has "taught for quite a while" and he has started to "get the rhythm of the class". Relationships gain depth with time and interaction. During the group meetings, the participants without even noticing they were doing it were referencing "inside jokes" that they shared with their students. Emily stated that she feels she has "all the time in the world" now that she is an inservice teacher and that it has removed the pressure of feeling as though she has to look for and follow up every relationship the moment it arises. Whether it was a simple gain of five weeks over their previous semester or an entire year, the participants approached their teaching and relationships with a sense of security and ownership that was not evident when they began as preservice teachers. Having the time to form and engage in relationships with their students was, for them, a necessity; whether that was in the framework of the semester or even just a day.

A number of other researchers also indicate the importance of time in the formation of relationships between teachers and their students. Kesner (2000) stipulated that it is not a fair comparison to compare the student teacher relationships of an inservice and a preservice teacher if for no other reason than the inservice teacher has nine months to build the relationship, whereas the preservice teachers he worked with had only two and a half months. Elliott et al. (1999) very directly pointed out how "longer practica make for better teachers". They discussed how longer blocks of teaching allowed beginning teachers to "remove the focus from themselves as teacher performers and visitors in the classroom and place it on the students' learning" (p.10) and that the "loss

of the relationship had a more significant impact on the teachers after the long practicum than on the teachers that had a shorter practicum" (p.17).

This category concludes with a quote from a colleague (Personal Conversation, April 17, 2007) describing his experiences teaching high school at two different schools, and what the transition was for him when he made the move from one school to the other. It indicates the pivotal role that time, and the history that develops with time, plays in the relationships he built with the students at each school.

> When I was a teacher at 'A', it seems like I knew every student in the building - all 2000. Of course I had been there for 12 years. I coached, supervised and got involved in so many student projects I could say hi to almost every student in the halls, and whether I did know them or not, I always made sure I did. However, when I moved to 'R' I had to start over, I knew only a couple of the kids from my coaching and all of a sudden I had to start managing my class again. I can't even imagine what it must be like for a student teacher.

Summary

We assume that the more time and history one has with people the deeper relationship one has with them. For the participants in this study, time played a role in their relationships in two ways. First, the amount of time they had in their day to interact with their students both in and outside of the classroom. Second, the overall length of time that they spent in each school they taught at over the length of this study. Short term student teaching placements were considered to be more of an aberration than an accurate representation of teaching; an aberration which denied them access to many aspects of teaching and genuine interactions with their students. Long term practica and inservice teaching tended to be described quite differently since both represented an increased amount of time. Long term placements were typically seen as fundamental to forming 'good' relationships with their students.

5.12) Finding the relationship amidst a technical inclination toward teaching

Virtually all members of the public have gone through some form of education, had teachers, and have been students. Thus, many in the public feel qualified to speak to what

teaching "is" or "should be", since they have been there and have some sense of what works for them. When parents send their children off to school, it is with some conception of what will or should happen. Unfortunately, so much of teaching is invisible, what has been described as the "background behaviors of teaching", and thus superficially teaching appears to be not much more than knowing a subject and using observable techniques to deliver it. Note the role of public perception in this quote from Goodland (1990) on a shift that he has observed in education.

> The push of students toward what appears to work, backed by public perception of teaching as a natural activity based on common sense, has forced programs toward the technocratic rather than the theoretical. (p. 224)

Year after year, as an instructor of science curriculum and instruction classes, I have seen students come to class expecting to be taught the techniques of teaching. In an analog to a common approach taken to learn physics, students want to be "told the formula and where to use it". It was my observation that the participants commonly referenced various pedagogical techniques such as how to plan lessons, write on the board, move around class, make eye contact, employ "wait time", and so on as "putting tools in my toolbox". Note the technical approach they are employing in the following examples.

In one instance in which Christine was being observed teaching, I could almost literally see her running through her toolbox of pedagogical techniques. At one point, just shortly after glancing down at her lesson she rather abruptly started into motion and began to move around the class very deliberately, stopping and standing near certain students as she moved. Upon review of her lesson plan after class I noted how she had written a reminder to move around the class and try to use proximity to manage behavior. When asked, she noted how her mentor had pointed out to her in a previous lesson that she needed to do more of that. Other examples included how the participants commonly labeled themselves as employing "referent", "expert" or "legitimate" power techniques – a testimony to their attachment to the terms they learned from Levin and Nolan (1991) during a management class they had taken while on campus. Kelly mentioned that when she is teaching, she is always reminding herself to wait for responses from her students after asking a question by muttering the words "wait-time" under her breath. In this

example from Steven in which he was observing his mentor teach, he admired a technique his mentor employed and wanted to add it to his repertoire. "I've noticed that eye contact works really well for 'R'; I've definitely added this to my teacher's utility belt."

Perhaps an early technical approach by these beginning teachers should not be a surprise. Aside from using this approach to learn many other subjects as students, the techniques of teaching are tangible and are one of the few things they feel they have some direct control over in an otherwise chaotic and overwhelming world that teaching can be. Both Abe and Marie discussed that it was through planning and intentional application of some of the defined techniques of teaching that they felt as though they had some ability to anticipate and control their classes, and thus increased confidence in themselves as teachers. Additionally, I was in a unique position as a researcher to review the participants' journals which had already been read and had comments written into them by the participants' mentors and university supervisors. Aside from the commendations, the feedback that the participants were given was almost exclusively directed toward improving some technical aspect of their instruction, like wait-time or movement around class. Thus not only did the participants describe a natural inclination toward 'techne' (the origin for the word 'technique' - which is Greek in origin and has been defined as the practical application of knowledge), but they were receiving reinforcement from their informed supervisors to continue to remain focused on these aspects (presumably because it is something tangible for the supervisors to note and comment on). This technical approach was also described as being intentionally used by the participants as a means to influence their student teacher relationships.

Phil is a planner, and gained confidence from the structure of his lesson plans. Additionally, he admitted that he felt vulnerable professionally when his students attempt to engage him on a more personal level. He described using some of the rigidity of the techniques he learned to shield himself against these personal interactions. Taylor in almost an opposite fashion was employing board writing techniques he had learned to increase the efficiency of his material delivery and thus freed himself to interact with students more interpersonally. The majority of the participants eventually came to a point of frustration, however; the technical approach they learned and had reinforced did not

seem to be enough. Some described "feeling disconnected from the students", others expressed frustration that even though they were "going by the book" the kids were still out of control and they did not know what to do. As an instructor I have told my preservice education students that "one day you will look up from your lesson plans and your toolboxes and be surprised to discover *your* students looking back at you – it is on that day that you will truly become a teacher." I doubt if many of the participants had such an epiphanic moment, but most described wanting more from teaching than a focus on the application of teaching techniques.

In the previous paragraph I described Phil's predisposition to use pedagogical techniques as a shield. Ironically, in the following quotes drawn from Phil's inservice journal, I noted a shift away from a technical inclination.

> After the first couple of weeks, I was still typing them out and wasting all that time, but I found that in-class I needed to stay focused on what was going on in the class and on my interaction with the class, that I wasn't really looking at them.

> My increased focus on my interactions with the students in class, and going with things as they work and change from day to day, instead of fighting it, and trying to adhere to my strict planning, has made a huge difference. My classes are going smoother, and I feel that I have developed very good relationships with most of my students (I even got lots of Halloween and Christmas presents this year from my kids…, it was kind of exciting for me).

Jim also described a shift in his priorities as a teacher from being focused on the material and how to deliver it, to a personal attachment to his students and a desire to see them succeed in their schoolwork.

> I also looked over my class today and felt like their teacher. I realized that I am beginning to get to know these kids. The relationship I have with the material is slowly drifting from highly important to moderately or of little importance. What is replacing this is an increasing importance (more like a need) to have a relationship with my students whereby they know me and I know them. I like these guys, and I want to see them succeed. Furthermore, as this student-teacher relationship grows and develops I think my ability to help them learn will also blossom.

The student teacher relationship had become crucial for Jim and his teaching. This progression would not be a surprise to Kornelsen (2006). He described how the beginning teachers he has worked with have all undergone a shift from teaching with an emphasis

on technique to teaching with an aptitude better described as *phronesis*, that is, the ability to think about how and why we should act in order to change things.

Progression or not, there are many researchers that are quite open in their criticism of approaching teaching as an application of technique. In each of the following quotes, the researchers report that the *value* is lost when education programs and teachers focus on the mechanics of teaching (the how) without an awareness of the human qualities and potentials involved.

> The epistemology of teaching must encompass a pedagogy that goes for beyond the *mechanics* of teaching. It must combine generalizable principles of teaching, subject-specific instruction, sensitivity to the pervasive human qualities and potentials always involved, and full awareness of what it means to simultaneously "draw out" and enculturate. (Goodland, 1990, p. 50)

> My experience as well as that of many other teacher educators indicates that if we do not challenge our students to engage such [philosophic and foundational] questions, they easily fall into the trap of equating teaching with being a good technician. They may be skilled at writing formal lesson plans and controlling their classes, but know very little about what a worthy education means and how to cultivate it. (Hitz and Roper, 1986, p. 53)

> In [critical complex teacher education programs], students don't walk into the university teacher education classrooms asking for four sure-fire steps to effective classroom management. They understand that the concepts engaged in the university classroom involve a different type of knowledge, a more sophisticated epistemology of practice that moves beyond providing steps to particular classroom activities. (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 14)

> Dunne argues that teaching (or any form of human interaction) cannot be reduced to technique, because teaching is not a process of making objects but a practice of engaging in human interaction. He says that this calls for teachers to bring qualities of mind, character, and practice transcending skillful application of technique. To teach effectively, Dunne says, the practice of techne is indispensable. However, to ensure that the techniques are deployed in right relation to the right person in a given situation, what teaching calls for is knowledge of phronesis. Phronesis must underlie techne. (Kornelsen, 2006, p. 79)

As is pointed out by Kornelsen above, 'good' teaching is a mixture of technique, art and wisdom. Beginning teachers require all of these components to be effective, and it is a large task to ask of education programs to design programs that allow preservice teachers

to develop all three aspects. Despite the researchers quoted above being discouraged at the decidedly technical focus that preservice teachers are entering schools with, the participants in this study indicated that for them it was a necessary starting point; it gave them something concrete to bring with them as they entered the class for the first time. Most realized in their own way (and time), that having a "toolbox" filled with techniques was not enough, and began to focus on other aspects of teaching.

Summary

The participants began their preservice practica with a decidedly technical approach to teaching. This is not a surprise as it is the approach that most closely resembles their experiences as students and that tends to be the focal point of feedback received from informed supervisors. With time and experience, this technical orientation seemed to shift, awareness was not enough, and a more humanistic focus developed. An approach that goes beyond technique is well supported in the research, and may or may not be an eventuality whether it is part of the beginning teachers' preservice education program or not.

Meta Categories

The 'meta categories', as I have called them, are findings that emerged in the data that speak to the entirety of the research process. Specifically, the meta categories include a description of the progression or change in the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants as they gained experience, and a description of my presence, role and influence on the findings that emerged from the data collected in the research.

Beginning teachers and the evolution of their student teacher relationships as they gain experience

> It's really hard to believe that a year ago I was in my IPT and student teaching in the classroom. I don't really feel like that person anymore.

By choosing to study the relationship experiences of the participants longitudinally, as they progressed through their preservice education programs and into inservice teaching, I have deliberately chosen to study how their student teacher relationships changed with a gain in experience.

What changes in teachers as they gain experience is a topic that has been discussed in the research literature. A specific focus on the change in student teacher relationships, however, is not a common focus for other research. Carter (1993) indicated that a focus on the experiences and events surrounding novice teachers as they gain experience would likely "capture a fundamental process" in their development. I have certainly found that to be the case in my research. Flores (2003) is even more specific, stipulating that according to the students she interviewed, the student teacher relationship was the dimension of beginning teachers that changed the most. I do not have the capacity to speak to what changed the most about the student teachers in general, as the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants were the focal point of this research to the exclusion of the other aspects of teaching. However, it was evident that the student teacher relationships of the participants did change as they gained experience and there have been some examples of this progression discussed previously in this chapter. For instance, the participants seemed to gain an awareness of the interdependent

nature of instruction, management, and relationships in their classes as they gained experience; or how with a gain in experience the participants claimed to get better at knowing where to draw the line between themselves and their students. This category discusses further data that points to the participants' student teacher relationships changing as a function of gaining teaching experience.

An orientation toward working with students is a requirement for a teacher. If they did not at least begin with this orientation they would have chosen an alternative career. Proclamations by the prospective teachers of "how much they love kids" or "love working with kids" was not unusual in preservice education classes I taught. The participants in this research began with an orientation toward student teacher relationships. Perhaps it might even have been the reason they decided to participate in this research. Weinstein (1989) talked about this initial orientation in the students he interviewed who were attempting to get into a preservice education program and become teachers. He reports:

> Prior to student teaching, preservice teachers held an image of the teacher as a "guide and friend" and viewed the teacher-pupil relationship as one of "warmth, cooperation, and mutual respect". Bontempo and Digman (1985) found that 50% of the entry-level teacher candidates they surveyed cited "enjoy working with children" as the primary motivation for choosing a teaching career; consistent with this, in response to a question about what they most looked forward to in their relationships with students, almost 40% replied "getting to know students." In comparison, "helping students learn" was cited by 28%. (p. 54)

This student-directed orientation shifted once they began teaching. The conversations of the participants shifted from an orientation toward the connections they made with their students to concerns better categorized as achievement or management oriented. Contrast the following two quotes from Marie. The first is from near the beginning of her first student teaching journal, the second is from her second practicum journal.

> I found a moment to compliment her on her hair. She seemed to really respond to that and hasn't given me too many problems since then. I am going to try to find more opportunities to build relationships with the kids in my science class.

> Not everyone is going to get A's in my classes, so if they don't want to put the effort in, there isn't much I can do for them. I'll go crazy if I worry about every single student. I'm also going to try and be less emotionally

> involved. I'm not in the business of making people like me, I'm in the business of helping people learn.

Marie is an example of a participant who went through a clear shift in her orientation toward her students in her class. She would openly profess to being "driven to have a relationship with every student" in her first semester, but had shifted toward a priority on the learning of the material she was teaching and thus student achievement in her classes.

> My new favorite compliment is not "you are a great teacher", but rather it is "wow, you really know your stuff". I am also learning that as a teacher, it's not my job to make all the kids like me, it's my job to make sure those who want to learn are getting the education they need.

Emily also has shifted her orientation toward her students by her second student teaching semester.

> A girl crying is not a problem for the girl, but is a problem because she isn't learning and it is being disruptive for the others learning.

Kagan (1992) has seen a similar shift in focus of beginning teachers and stated that the focus of novice and beginning teachers is driven by issues of teacher identity and "self", but that they begin to resolve these issues of self as they gain experience and as they do so, their focus shifts from self to the design of instruction and pupil learning.

This shift did not seem to be permanent, however. As the participants gained experience and confidence in the class, they returned to a student orientation that they had lost for the period when they were attempting to gain some facility with the other components of teaching. Kornelsen (2006) discussed how this progression from focused on technique to a focus on more humanistic elements may be simply a function of a gain in confidence and experience. "Being self-confident and skilled in teaching techniques (having the knowledge of techne) may presage teaching with presence, teaching with a focus on human interaction" (p. 80). Abe, for example, was a participant who stated an overt orientation toward the material he was teaching early on in his preservice program – coming to that orientation before any of the other participants. Yet, in his inservice journal he writes of a perspective that is more oriented toward the people (students) in his class, that is, humanistic.

> No matter what happens, you need to show that you genuinely care about every student. Once you stop caring or lose faith, then you are truly setting

> them up for failure. You need to show that you care and are committed to finding a way for students to experience success.

Whatever prompts the change is likely different from individual to individual, but the consistency with which the participants describe how their priorities shifted from the students, to the material and management of instruction, and then back to the students is not coincidence. Perhaps with experience they are gaining sensitivity to the details of their students' lives and how these details are intricately tied to the relative success the students have in the participants' classrooms. In a conversation I had with Marie after observing her teach in her first inservice semester, she referenced the reasons that her students were having difficulty with the topic that she had taught that day. Without even realizing she was doing it she was drawing on her awareness of her student's lives (problems at home, vehicle trouble and so on) to help explain some of the behaviors she was dealing with in class. Her relationship with her students had progressed to a point in which she was now able to look beyond the behavior itself for help in deciding her actions in class. As compared to her first inservice semester when she exclusively blamed herself for all of the class's learning or management difficulties, clearly Marie had undergone a progression in her relationship with her students. Kelly also referenced how her teaching was being helped by a broadening awareness of her students – something she is gaining with more experience. "I find it hard to judge where they do not understand, though I am getting a better feel for who understands."

When you speak to a beginning teacher about their students, they often characterize them as victims (being made to attend school or suffer through hardship or 'bad' teaching), receptacles ("they are there to learn what I have to teach"), and at times even as a faceless mob ("I hate that class"). Generally speaking, however, the thought that their students are humans with lives and issues both inside and outside of school seemed to be a surprise to the participants. They are so busy thinking of teaching as "we" vs. "they" that they do not pick up the "I" and "you". So many times during our earlier group meetings, the participants expressed surprise, humor or even anger when they talked about a moment when their students were human and not just a student. Emily for example, discussed in a group meeting how she discovered a dislike for some of her students and how they were treating her. Explaining "I don't care what their home-life is

like; they have no right to treat me like that". It seemed to be growing awareness of the humanness of their students that sparked this growth in the beginning teacher to see their students as people as well as students, and the result seemed to be a deepening of the relationship between them. They learned that that they can be themselves as well as "the teacher" and conversely that their pupils can be human and "students" at the same time as well.

Perhaps the most prominent example of how experience and their evolving student teacher relationships influenced the participants personally and professionally was during the management of their classes. Their burgeoning awareness of their students and the contexts they originated from was allowing them to be proactive in their classroom management instead of reactive.

> I am going to have to find a way for them to show me respect. I will start off by going back to the seating plan. They're not bad but I can see things becoming bad. I am also worried that Z is not learning and in danger of failing.

This quote from Emily demonstrated how she became aware enough of her students to put actions into place to *prevent* management issues. This is in stark contrast to her more common situation of having to react to whatever happens either because she did not foresee it or because as a preservice teacher she did not feel empowered to put changes in place in someone else's class. Emily spoke about this empowerment she was gaining as she taught more. She had realized that she not only had the right to manage the class, but also the obligation. That is was her responsibility and not the school's or mentor teacher's issue. She had taken ownership for the students and as a result, acted to minimize problems in *her* class.

Ben also talked about a shift in his classroom management style as he gained experience and comfort with his students. Ben went from explicitly laying down rules (or at least following the already laid down rules) in his first preservice practicum to a more "cursory management" style in his second student teaching semester. A management style better characterized by looks, shakes of head, gentle touch and immediate presence amongst the students (as opposed to in front by board) – all without interrupting the lesson or making a big deal about it. Ben grew better at 'hearing' the problems through the noise of a working class, and he believed this stems from a much more student

oriented level of awareness and attention he gained with experience. In an interesting epilogue to this change in management style that Ben underwent, during his first inservice year, a year Ben described as "being trapped in a situation that did not allow him to build relationships with his students", Ben changed his management style again. Ben has lost the willingness or time to address the individuals in class, thus his management style is better characterized once again as group statements, and collective assumptions – he is not teaching individuals, he is teaching a 'class entity'; a style he began with as a preservice teacher, but had shed with experience. This suggested that the relationship he developed with his students in his second semester was a key component of his classroom management approach, and when he was "forced" to minimize the student teacher relationship moments, he reverted to a management style he described as "hating in the teachers I had in high school".

The discussion in this category to this point has focused on data that indicated an improvement or change in some aspect of the participants' teaching as a result of a deepening relationship with their students that accompanied a gain in teaching experience. There were a number of instances in the data, however, in which the participants assumed that a gain in experience would create a desired change thereby enabling them to cope with what they thought of as a weakness in their situation or teaching. In other words, they *counted on* change due to experience and relationship, not *recounted* change due to experience and relationship. During a conversation with Phil after spending the afternoon observing him teach, he admitted he felt that his relationships with his students was a weak point of his teaching. He hoped that as he gained experience he would gain a bigger repertoire of actions and a better awareness of what "makes students tick", and as a result, his relationships with them would improve. He was counting on more experience improving his relationships with his students. Ben went a step further and states that he hopes his relationships improve with time and experience, because "I hate who I am as a teacher right now". Taylor talked about how he would like to improve his classroom perception; he needed to take note of which students were not doing what he wanted them to do. He hoped that as he continued to gain experience that these perceptions would continue to develop, since he has noticed that he has improved in this area. Kelly discussed how her limited experience in teaching taught

her something about herself and is counting on more teaching experience allowing her to continue to grow into the teacher she wishes to become. "It's good that I find this stuff out about myself so I can change what I need to do in order to adapt to different classes." Aikenhead (2006) would advise not to read too much into these revelations reported by these beginning teachers. In this quote he has taken from Luft (2001, p. 517) he suggested that typically, "neophyte science teachers changed their beliefs more than their practices, whereas the experienced teachers demonstrated more change in their practices than their beliefs" (p. 71). Aikenhead seemed to be suggesting that coming to a revelation and putting an appropriate action into place in response are not the same thing and may actually be a difference between beginning and experienced teachers.

The cliché "everything tastes good when you are hungry" was analogously apparent in the data. When the participants began their student teaching, they were hungry for a relationship with their students, and any interaction they had with their students impacted upon them, and was both noted and exemplified as having influenced them. With experience, there seemed to be desensitization to these "relationship moments", and thus the participants seemed to undergo a shift in what they considered to be a relationship moment and also how they subsequently judged its importance. For instance, Emily as an inservice teacher does not mention her day to day interactive moments with her students very often anymore (in contrast with her first student teaching semester), favoring a focus on the moments in which there are personal revelations made by her students to her. Christine is another example of this "editing" process. Early on in her progression she reported a number of interactions with her students that originated with her needing to react to inappropriate actions on the students' part. In these instances she reflected on the discussions she had with the students and pronounced "I will not have any more problems with those students". Not surprisingly, she later did have more problems with those same students, and thus later in her journals she seemed to stop attributing long-term significance to her interactions. She stopped seeing interactions as "fixing" problems, and had come to consider them to be more like a maintenance activity.

Generally speaking, the participants report many instances in which an improvement in their student teacher relationships resulted in an improvement in some aspect of their teaching. I conclude this section with the observation that this was not

always the case. Christine was a participant who was wholeheartedly directed toward developing and improving her relationship with her students – actively seeking every opportunity that might promote this goal. Nonetheless, near the end of her second student teaching practicum she reflected in her journal that her pursuit of a relationship with her students was making her vulnerable to them. They were using her willingness to get "free tutoring", "free counseling" and perhaps even try to influence the marks they were receiving from Christine by becoming her "pet". This in addition to what Christine described as "having a deep enough awareness of me and my life to really hurt me if they wanted to." She reflected that she was going to have to find a way to "put barriers in place" without jeopardizing the relationships she had built. It would seem that student teacher relationships could bring with them a level of interaction that makes teaching more complicated than it is with a less personal level of interaction.

Researcher's presence/influence on the research

It seems almost a truism to state that I as the researcher am intricately and intimately tied to this research. In this research, my involvement goes beyond traditional statements of reflexivity or transparency. True, I influenced, and in turn was influenced by the research, and I do wish to make the reader as aware as possible throughout this document of my biases that are influencing the topic being discussed. Perhaps in a testimony to this being student teacher relationship research, my relationship with the participants is not typical. My first interaction with the 13 participants was as one of their University preservice education instructors. After my class was concluded, I asked for volunteers to work with me on student teacher relationship research, and the 13 prospective teachers that became this study's participants stepped forward. At this point my relationship with them took on other aspects. I became a researcher to them, but due to the length and interpersonal format of the research, I also became a mentor, confidant, reference and perhaps even friend to these 13 people. As I discuss later, the 13 participants and I became part of each others support group and perhaps even lives, and our interactions continue even now that the research has 'finished'. This category will attempt to detail and discuss the data describing my perceived influence on the research and the participants. Additionally, I discuss some of the influence the research process has had on me.

Eisner (1998) discussed how valuable and necessary the level of involvement of researchers is in qualitative research when he quoted Peshkin (1985).

> My subjectivity is functional and the results it produces are rational. But if they are rational only to me and no one else, not now or ever, then I have spawned illusions and my views are bound to be ignored. When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about their nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. If somehow, all researchers were alike, we would all tell the same story (insofar as its non-denotable aspects are concerned) about the same phenomenon. By virtue of subjectivity, I tell the story I am moved to tell. Reserve my subjectivity and I do not become a value-free participant observer, merely an empty headed one. (p. 280)

Typically, qualitative research uses a lot of "analogical logic", which Eisner (1998, p. 90) described as "This is what I did, what I saw/heard/smelled and what I think it means. Does it have any analogy in or bearing on your experiences?" In many ways he is speaking to the generalizable value of qualitative research – it allows the reader to connect to the experiences of the participants and the researcher, to draw analogy to their own experiences and hopefully take away from it something of personal value and connection to their own context. In this category I discuss the evidence that emerged from the data that demonstrated what my impact was on the research and participants. Not as some sort of qualifier of the value of the research, but rather in an attempt to allow the reader to connect this research to their own experiences – as researchers themselves, or perhaps as teachers or students.

Any stranger in a classroom is a disruption for that class. The participants described how they felt like strangers in their mentors' classrooms when they first arrived to begin their practica; soon, however, they became part of the 'normal' environment for that class. As the researcher, I visited classes more than once but never became a part of the classes operating norm and thus my visits typically could be classed as a disruption. Often I would be the recipient of furtive, even overt looks from the students as they attempted to determine who I was and what I was doing in their class. Both Kelly and Emily discussed with me how their students were "good today", which was unusual and thus they believed it was due to my presence in their classroom. To complicate the

situation, Steven, Marie, Christine and Abe all stated how they were acutely aware of my presence in the back of the room and that they were more nervous as a result. I attempted to minimize this impact by reiterating to them that I was not in the room to judge them, only to get a better sense of the context they were alluding to in our group meetings and in their journals, and to observe them interact with their students. Any changes to the student's or teacher's behavior though, called into question the 'realness' of any observed interactions between the participants and their students. Thus I have tried throughout this document not to state any moment taken from a classroom as exemplary of 'everyday' behavior, but rather as an example illustrating the category in which it is discussed. The regularity (or irregularity) of the moment is not the issue – it is accepted as being a moment that was observed, that speaks to the category in which it is discussed, nothing more.

It is interesting to note that the amount of disruption my presence in the class and school caused was directly proportional to the size of the school and seemingly, whether it was an urban or rural school. Small, rural, and usually more isolated schools do not get as many 'strangers' walking their halls and classes. The adults in these places are known and thus when you are not known, you stand out and cause more disruption. During a visit to a small, private East Indian school for example, I was introduced and treated as a dignitary from *the University* and thus a parade of senior staff were brought by to meet me, even in the middle of classes I was observing. On top of these interruptions, the students were continually glancing at me and wondering about the presence of a non-Indian in their class. Clearly I was a disturbance to the operating norm of this school. The large urban schools I visited, by contrast, hardly even noticed I was there. There were many 'strange' adults walking their halls daily, and I was just another in a seemingly endless stream of them. I asked one of the mentors about this during a visit to one of these large, urban schools and he commented that on any given day they had between 20-30 substitute teachers (which were different each time), any number of parents and school division personnel, trades people doing renovations, and so forth.

Another of the influences this research seemed to have on the participants is an increased focus on and sensitivity to the student teacher relationship. In many ways this seems to be a chicken and egg phenomenon. Did the participants enter the research

already oriented toward the student teacher relationship (thus that is why they volunteered for the research), or did they adopt this orientation as a result of my focus and the focus of the research? Regardless, of where the participants' focus on the student teacher relationship originated, it was evident in both the group meetings and their journals. There were many instances in which they offered a "relationship narrative" in addition to their comments, stating things such as "… and this relates to relationships because…" or "the relationship caused me to…"; seemingly, the participants were seeking to help me by pointing out these relationship moments or perhaps identify for themselves what were relationship moments and what were not. At one point during a group meeting I even commented that they did not need to remain focused on the student teacher relationship; they could talk about whatever concerned them and to let me worry about what was related to their relationships and what wasn't. I was worried that I would lose the greater context of their experiences as a whole if the participants only ever spoke or wrote about those moments they considered to be "relationship ones" - thus losing all of the experiences the participants were not aware spoke to their relationships as well.

As mentioned at the outset of this category, I was more than a researcher to the participants. One of the other manners in which we interacted was as an experienced teacher who was offering my own experiences and examples of choices I have made to prospective teachers seeking guidance or strategies to use. In many ways this was the basis for much of our interaction while I was their instructor, and thus it seemed quite natural for this to continue even after they became participants reacting to the pragmatics of their day. These words and examples seemingly influenced the participants' actions and thinking as I began to see evidence of my "advice" in the data. Note in the following quote how Kelly's interpretation of an interaction with some of her students is being influenced by an example I had discussed with the participants in which a student teacher was being "played" by the students.

> Some of them are asking me when I'm going to start teaching their class, and seem to take an interest in knowing me a little. I am happy about this, but then that thing you said about whether a student is trying to "play me" pops into my head. But I do think that they are genuine, and just want to know who'll be teaching them, and not planning to manipulate me.

There are a number of instances in which a topic that was discussed by me as a part of the research process, whether that was during a group meeting, school visit, or whether it emerged later in the actions or words of the participants as having an influence on their student teacher relationships. I neither apologize for nor regret this, despite this being an example of how in the absence of this research or my "advice" the participants may have interpreted the situation differently. A person can play a "what if" game for everything in their lives, "what if I had not gone to work that day?", or what if they had never introduced me?", and the student teacher relationship experiences of the participants are no exception. I did influence their thinking and in some cases their actions. If not me, then someone else likely would have and did. What seems important in these examples is that *the participants* connected to these tidbits either from me, or elsewhere and resonated with them enough to alter their thinking and actions as a result. As a teaching colleague once mentioned, "we offer the opportunity to connect to what we give, whether the students do or not is a testimony to who they are and what they value."

The research process itself also seemed to have an influence on the participants' relationships. As already alluded to, the school visit component of the research process would at times create disruptions in the class which consequently influenced the observed interactions between the participants and their students. However, the group meetings seemed to have a much larger influence on the participants. The group became an entity with an intrinsic value to the participants beyond the research; many of the participants began friendships, actively seeking each other outside of meeting times, friendships that continue even now that the group meetings are finished. There was an overwhelming affirmation by the participants that the student teaching experience is lonely and estranging – "nobody gets you or what you are going through", and the group members (and group meetings) were described as a "lifeline", meeting their need to share and commiserate. The best evidence of the impact of this was the participants began to co-opt statements and sentiments made by other participants. Abe, for example, discusses how his management style and interactions are not a "killing them with kindness" style; a statement he had heard one of the other participants, Tim, make during a group meeting. I would like to be clear, however, that the participants did not value the research components equally throughout the research process. Particularly during their inservice

semester, the time required to attend group meetings or write in their journals was hard to justify for the participants, so these components became better described as "finishing something I started" as Abe described, more than as a "valued aspect of my professional development", or how Christine described the research a semester earlier. Ben even discussed how writing in his journal during his inservice teaching semester was difficult for him because it reminded him of his perceived weaknesses as a teacher.

> I found it very difficult to write in a journal since the beginning of September due to my current feelings on my performance as a new teacher. I was unable to approach the journal writing this time around with a positive outlook and I believe I may have avoided doing so as a mechanism to not lower my spirits any further.

Whether it was my words, the words of a fellow participant or the research components themselves, the participants emerged from this research influenced by their involvement in it. They approached their relationships with the perspectives of others coloring their awareness and judgments, and adopted the orientations with which they resonated.

There are many other researchers who have discussed the role of the researcher in the research process. Carter (1993) stated that whether the researcher states their role explicitly or not, their influence on the research is reflected in the research focus they choose, the time, sequencing and mechanisms allotted to the research, and especially in the stories and examples they choose to tell.

> What we tell and how we tell it is a revelation of what we believe. From this perspective, stories are not merely raw data from which to construct interpretations but products of a fundamentally interpretive process that is shaped by the moralistic impulses of the author and by narrative forces or requirements. And these interpretive elements operate regardless of who the author is. (p. 9)

Carter reflected that it is the choices of the researcher that drives how the research "story" is told, and thus even in studies attributed to originating with the opinions of the participants, it is still being modulated by the researcher. This research is no exception to this belief held by Carter. I have chosen which of the participants' experiences to exemplify in this document. It is not stand alone data, but rather contextualized data that illustrates my interpretation of what it means with regards to a study on student teacher relationships. The notes I took during the group meetings or classroom observations are

"an active reconstruction of the events rather than a passive recording, which would suggest that the events could be recorded without the researcher's interpretation" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p. 5). A different researcher would choose different emphases, a different voice, and different examples, but as Eisner (1998) stated "detachment and distance are not virtues when one wants to improve complex social organizations or so delicate a performance as teaching" (p. 2). I do not excuse my closeness to the participants or the topic, but I have tried to make my choices and orientations transparent for the reader so that they may judge for themselves the verisimilitude of how I have presented the data. The following two quotes from Geelan (2003) summarize quite well the approach I have tried to maintain when designing and conducting this research. I have come to define this orientation as an attempt to be "transparent".

> Qualitative inquiry recognizes that the researcher is intimately involved in the research, and that this will introduce biases and personal understandings and subjectivities. One strategy for allowing the research to remain transferable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and useful to others is to make these biases and subjectivities as explicit as possible through introducing readers to the researcher/author and his/her intentions. (p. 37)

> My practices were not those of an 'objective' researcher whose purpose was to passively observe the activities of others and to attempt to make sense of them, but of a teacher, educationally involved with young people, who was attempting to richly understand that involvement in order to improve it. (p. 66)

Objectivity and subjectivity are a part of research that most researchers consider. I too considered these aspects but believe they are not relevant considerations for this research because as Eisner (1998) described, they are based on the idea that there is an "ontologically objective view of the world"; something I disagree with. The experiences of the participants were just that, experiences of the participants; dependent upon the specific context, history, and circumstances of the moment. The experience was unique and *constructed* not *had*. I have done my best to represent the experience and what it may mean to the participant and this research, but it is *my* representation, certainly not Truth. This study does illustrate that experiences are unique to those involved in them, and that at best, a representation of them will *ring true* not *be true*.

This research influenced more than the participants and their relationships, it also had an influence on me, as a researcher and as a teacher. I would like to conclude this category with a brief description of the growth and awareness that this study has prompted within me.

As a preservice education instructor at the University as well as a department head while teaching, part of my job was to evaluate teachers. In that role I was required to 'judge' the teaching of others and offer some feedback and insights based on my observations. Typically, I had very little awareness of the situation, and thus was reduced to focusing on more technical and objective aspects such as exam scores, or management strategies. As a researcher I needed to shed that role. I constantly reminded myself to be an 'accepting observer' and not a 'judging evaluator'. I tried to make my observations of the teaching as contextual as possible, seeing the moment as part of the participants' story instead of as what should or could be or even what I would do. The result of this reorientation is that I have gained a deep appreciation for the story behind the overt behaviors being observed in the classroom. No longer was I viewing teaching as a series of meeting and missing intended outcomes, but rather as a dynamic, complex, contextual and dialectic negotiation between the teacher and the students. It is in this interpersonal interaction that the student teacher relationship is both defined and utilized. Every interaction, 'good' and 'bad' informs, is influenced by and defines the relationship between teacher and student. Judging the relationship on the basis of achievement or classroom noise level dismisses the role of what each person brings to the classroom, and how these contexts forge the moments that result.

In this chapter I have presented the data as belonging to and informing particular themes and categories, with the experiences of the participants serving as examples. I wanted to present the experiences richly, contextually, and contrast them with other research that speaks to the category being represented. In chapter 6, I shift the focus to conclusions that I have drawn from the data presented in this chapter, and present my reasons for doing so.

In qualitative research there is no statistical test of significance to determine if results "count"; in the end, what counts is a matter of judgment.

Elliott Eisner (1998, p. 39)

Chapter 6: Conclusions/Synthesis

Beginning preservice and inservice teachers are unique in the world of education. To become teachers they are asked to blend aspects of themselves, societal expectations, a predominantly theoretical university program, and the pragmatic world of classrooms and students. Add to this their own experiences with schools as a student, and the duality of having to switch between student and teacher at will and on demand – it becomes surprising that anyone manages to become a functioning teacher. Beginning teachers are inundated with technical, practical, theoretical, and even personal expectations as they strive to master the 'teacher' learning curve fast enough to develop into the teachers they imagine they can be.

Surprising, is how quickly the chaotic world of the beginning teacher is forgotten. Mentors, professors, university facilitators, parents, and even students expect beginning teachers to 'perform' at levels that they have little awareness of, or experience with doing. For example, it was remarkable how often the participants' supervising teachers (their mentors) were surprised by how inexperienced these beginning teachers really were; it appears that the mentor rarely discriminated between the experience and capabilities of student teachers at different stages of preservice practica. This research was an attempt to describe the student teacher relationship experiences of beginning teachers and portray them for pedagogical stakeholders. Beginning teachers have a difficult and exhausting life – their stories have value in that others can learn from them.

In this chapter, I first state the claims/patterns/conclusions that have been realized from the research. Second, I explain the basis for the claim as well as contextualize it by referencing other research literature relevant to the claim. Third, I attempt to answer the question, "So what?" That is, what is the significance of the claim? Later in the chapter I coalesce these conclusions into a section I have entitled 'Synthesis/Recommendations', in which I discuss the implications for pedagogical stakeholders. This research may offer insights to other beginning teachers, inservice teachers, personnel in schools and school

divisions, and university preservice education programs. Morgan (2007) is explicit about the necessity for research to be used in other contexts, suggesting that the real value of research does not lie in statements of how contextual or generalizable it is, but rather whether the knowledge can transferred to other settings.

Patterns/Claims/Conclusions

Black birds singing in the dead of night

In 1991, Cynthia Chambers borrowed the metaphor "blackbirds singing in the dead of night" to describe the usefulness of presenting teacher narratives in the absence of an analysis and informed response being returned to them; arguing that teachers need to learn more than how to tell their own story.

> These authors offer us the naive hope that if teachers learn to tell and understand their own "story" they will be returned to their rightful place at the centre of curriculum planning and reform. And yet, their method leaves each teacher a "blackbird singing in the dead of night"; isolated, and sadly ignorant of how his/her song is part of a much larger singing of the world. If everyone is singing their own song, who is listening? How can we hear the larger conversation of humankind in which our own history is embedded and perhaps concealed? (p. 354)

Goodson (1997) similarly used a singing metaphor when he asked how does a teacher's "song" fit into the multitude of songs being sung? I found this metaphor to be useful for conceptualizing a finding of this research.

There were some common origins for the research participants; all were students in my class, all were science minors, they all had a goal to be teachers, and apparently all valued student teacher relationships (since they volunteered for research). However, their experiences as beginning teachers were unique and individual since they likely had different home situations, backgrounds, subject orientation, coursework, placements, influences, schedules, goals, and so on. This research gave them the opportunity through group meetings and conversations to establish common ground and share. They were no longer blackbirds singing into the night; rather they sang their songs to others who heard them, understood and related to them, and in return heard other songs sung back to them.

The teaching journey described by the participants seemed to operate on two levels – the 'I' and the 'We'. It was profound for the participants who lived and experienced the 'I' on a day to day basis to see how similar and different that was to the other 'I's' in the group, or at times, the other 'I's' in their schools. Even the language shifted. When the participants discussed their teaching while at school, or in their journals, they would reference their experiences from the first person perspective; "I couldn't believe they said that", or "I am not sure what to do" as just a few examples. However, when we sat in our group meetings, although discussion topics usually began with an "I" statement, in the course of seeing their concerns taken up and reflected back to them in the experiences of the other participants, their language when referencing these topics shifted to inclusive "we" statements. It was not unusual for this "we" of the group, to be extrapolated by the participants to the greater "we" of beginning teachers in general. Note in the following transcript excerpt taken from the second group meeting of their first preservice semester, how a number of the participants speak to the location of the relationship (and workload) topic from an "I" perspective, but this perspective shifts to a discussion of the topic from a "we" perspective that eventually is assumed to apply to all teachers.

> Abe – Assuming you had to know all the material and you had to teach fulltime like my mentor? My mentor teacher has eight classes; wait…, nine classes that she teaches. If I had her work load I'd have to learn the curriculum every day and make a lesson plan and deliver it and pay attention to the kids; the relationship with the kids is why we're here, right? Already my classes are suffering because I don't know my material well enough to teach it without having to think so I can keep my eye and my mind on what they are doing and if they're getting it. It's sort of like a cycle. I don't know if I could do it.
>
> Steven – Yah, I felt the same thing except during the lesson there is no relationship building other than the question and answers, that's kind of my opinion. I might be wrong on that.
>
> Ben – During the seat work you can't. When you're in front of thirty kids, how do you build an individual relationship? You have to come across knowing your stuff and hoping that they're getting it, asking questions for understanding. I found that most of my relationship building with the kids was between the eight minutes of classes, the coming in, calling them by names, asking them about the video game I overhear them talking about. I

start talking them to about it. Oh, that's cool, you have one? Little stuff like that. Grey Cup is coming up. The kid has his sports page open, talks about hockey, so during those eight minutes it's totally my entire relationship building time. During the lesson it's less and it's get to work with the Q & A's and then during seat work then you can kind of help them out with problems. I don't know who mentioned it. I just force myself on them because, I mean, really, you know, it's hard getting started. Like a lot of the kids will goof off then you force them to start the first question of their homework in class.

Emily – I don't know if you can really say that you can't do relationship building with the students during the lesson because it's your whole body language thing. We all smile at them; make eye contact with them. Just even the little things like that, they really appreciate that. If you are actually looking at them and paying attention to them when they're answering a question, it's like, wow, she's actually looking at me, focusing on me for a second and I think that is a really good thing in building relationships too. I don't think it's just talking to them, knowing them at a personal level, which yah of course you need to do too. I think we all are building relationships with them all the time. Aren't we?

Researcher – Perhaps you are defining the word 'relationship' differently?

Abe – Yah, cause to me those are like the basic things. All teachers when they are teaching want to look them in the eye and of course, call them by their name, but nobody can really get to know anything about them personally during the lesson, can they? We all just get smoother at making the lessons seem like relationships.

Emily – I don't know. My kids tell me stories all the time during class, which I respond to, and it doesn't seem fake or put on to me.

The conversation continued with series of agreements and disagreements about what a relationship was and where it happened. Aside from the topic, note how Emily made her point based on her own experiences, but by watching and responding to the group had come to the conclusion that she was not alone in this experience – that "we are all building relationships with them all the time". Whether it is driven by observation, the seeking of validation/consensus or even just voicing agreement/disagreement with another, the participants found a forum for their thoughts, and had their ideas reflected back at them in the experiences and ideas of the other participants going through a similar experience. Expressions of surprise and connection were common in the group

discussions as the participants discovered that so much of their 'I' experience was being shared and voiced by the 'We'.

In an analogy to participants (the "I") relating their experiences which they found a contextualization for in the research cohort (the "We"), Emily pointed out that her student teacher relationships seemed to take on this character as well. Emily's standard relationship is the one she has with all of her students. Characterized by knowing their names, a little about what they respond to, a sense of behavioral repertoire, and perhaps even some superficial awareness of their interests. The relationships she referred to as deeper and more personal were with those students that sought out interactions with her or who responded most positively to her interpersonal attempts. She knew much more about these students personally, what motivated them and what their plans were. She was actively trying to help them make 'good' choices and to positively influence their life paths. However, these deeper relationships were being subsumed by the more distant relationship she described as having with the "mobs"; the teacher-class relationship. She described two of her classes as "real pains – I like the students one on one, but together they make my life hell". When the individual experiences she had with a particular student were placed back into the broader context of the class as a whole, they stopped being positive to her. In this instance she did not value the relationship with these classes, even though they consisted of many individuals with whom she did value her relationships. Emily suspected it was due to a small core of students who were struggling personally and academically seeking to reduce others around them to their level, and thus influencing the whole class. Hoffer (1966) suggested this phenomenon of individuals assuming mass identities different than their individualized ones, does not occur because it can satisfy the desire for self-advancement, but because it can satisfy the passion for self-renunciation. This 'escape into the group' is one explanation for why the "I" and the "We" were observed in the group meetings as well. It is a powerful and attractive recourse to have your personal experiences rationalized and explained by the conceptualization that it is "normal", or "what most people go through". More likely, it was the realization that the "I" moments shared by the "We" demonstrated how similar the experiences of the participants were. In fact the data presented in this research and the conclusions drawn from them are based on this phenomenon.

In a personal conversation with a doctoral candidate conducting research into aboriginal ways of knowing, he described how his research indicated how the relationships among aboriginal individuals acted as the preliminary step behind the relationship of the community in traditional aboriginal culture – and the community relationship was paramount in their survival. Relationships for my participants began with an orientation toward the individual; learning how a one-on-one relationship situated within the class relationship was an aspect they discussed. However, the relationship experiences they described are also situated with the greater context of the experiences described by the community of beginning teachers, as evidenced by the participants 'discovering' how similar their experiences were to the described experiences of other participants. Their relationship experiences are not conveyed to potentiate the survival of the community – but it did arm the participants with the psychological defense to recognize that their idiosyncratic pedagogical worlds may not be so unique or unusual. The normalizing value derived from the beginning teacher community allowed the participants individually to survive, and thus the community itself survived. These blackbirds were not singing into the night – they sang to each other, and found harmony in the songs that were sung back to them.

"I hope I get a good one..."

Early in my doctoral program I was given the opportunity to act as a 'University facilitator', who is a liaison between the University and the teachers who mentored the student teachers. Prior to the onset of the practicum I met with the supervising teachers (the mentors) as well as school representatives so that I could introduce myself as well as gather information that the student teachers required before arriving the following Monday. During that meeting, one of the mentor teachers commented to me "I hope I get a good one"- referring to the quality of the student teacher they were assigned. That same day I met with the student teachers to provide them with the information I had gathered, and one of the student teachers, in an ironic and unaware parody of the mentor teacher earlier that day, stated "I hope I get a good one" – in this case referring to the quality of the mentor who they had been assigned to for their practicum. Aside from immediately

asking what a "good one" is, the similarity in concern of both the student teacher and the mentor is suggestive of many things, including previous experiences, reputation, control of assignments, and so on. In short, the eventual relationship that the student teacher had with the mentor, the school, and their students was largely set in motion by the placement choices of the practicum program administrators. This is not intended to be a commentary on the relative 'success' or 'failure' of these placement administrators in matching student teachers with well suited mentors, but it does speak to the importance that this matching had on the eventual experiences of the preservice teacher. In a broader sense, however, the impact of the practicum placements on the participants spoke to how specific events ultimately influence the relationship experiences of the participants, thus making these experiences unique and, often unintentional.

Kelly's second practicum was an illustration of how the mentor assigned to the student teacher came to dominate the experiences of a beginning teacher. During Kelly's second practicum, she was placed with a teacher who for undetermined reasons never came to trust and believe in her teaching abilities. Thus the mentor's actions, although guided by the need to "check-up" on Kelly, resulted in Kelly feeling tremendous insecurity, last minute changes to lessons she had worked long and hard on, and the conveyance to the students by the mentor that she did not trust Kelly to do a 'good' job. The result was Kelly's teaching and student teacher relationships were rife with instances of the students openly berating and disrespecting her. Kelly almost quit, but in a last ditch effort to save the practicum for her, she was transferred to a different mentor. From the beginning, her new mentor believed in Kelly, gave her the freedom and trust to teach as she saw fit, and conveyed this belief to the students. The result was a complete reversal of Kelly's teaching, a renewed belief in the value of student teacher relationships, and successful completion of the term. As luck would have it, one of the other participants was eventually given a job at this same school the following semester and I learned from him that Kelly's original mentor was assigned another student teacher and apparently the relationship between them was very positive and constructive. What was not a 'good' match for Kelly was a 'good' match for a different student teacher the following semester. This suggested that the mentor herself was not inherently 'bad', just 'bad for Kelly'. The importance of the mentor for beginning teachers is explicitly maintained by

Chang (1989) and Capa and Loadman (2004). These researchers similarly concluded that careful matching of mentors and preservice teachers is essential to give neophyte teachers the best chances of excelling in and benefiting from their practica.

The data in this study indicates that the mentor did have a pivotal role to play in the relationship experiences of the participants and that this was just one aspect that helped to make the participants' experiences unique. Reiff (2001) talked about a seemingly random series of events that seems to turn each day into an "adventure of unexpected occurrences" and "best guess solutions", openly wondering if any part of a teachers' day ends up being as it was intended. I believe that Davis and Sumara (1997), could use this as yet another example of why teaching is a *complex* activity not a *complicated* one. They suggested that teaching, and relationships as a part of teaching, cannot be approached like stereo instructions or mathematical equations; difficult, but possible to understand, that is, complicated. Student teacher relationships are messy, contextual, individual and an ever changing phenomenon which make them tough to quantify, explain, master and teach, that is, they are complex. Could a different person be taught to have relationships that mirror ours? Unlikely. Aside from the affect of having different individuals with their own history and character make up the relationship, the very process of being in a relationship changes us. Thus the relationship itself both creates and is a product of change, since it changes and is influenced by each individual participating in the relationship.

> They render problematic the notion of learners as situated *within* particular contexts. Rather, the cognizing agent is recast as *part of* the context. As the learner learns, the context changes, simply because one of its components changes. Conversely, as the context changes, so does the very identity of the learner. (Davis and Sumara, 1997, p. 111)

Proulx (2004) also stated that there needs to be a break from framing education in the language of behaviorism – that this *cause* (stimulus) creates the same *effect* (response) in all. He asserts that it is impossible to predict outcomes because the system itself changes through learning.

> It is then *not* the environment that determines learning, but the agent itself. This is explained by the fact that experiences are understood and interpreted on the basis of the agent's knowledge and prior experiences. This means that

> it is the agent's knowledge—its structure, its *internal dynamics*—that orients the kind of effect that an experience can have. (Proulx, 2004, p. 116)

This perspective not only helps explain why relationships are so messy and difficult to quantify, but also why they are of such value to a beginning teacher. A similar situation or environment produces different responses in different people or even a different response in the same individual the next time because they have changed in the interim. Yet the relationship between student and teacher offer some awareness or sensitivity on how best to interact with others despite each person in the relationship changing. Through interpreting body language, having a forum to discuss changes, and even the willingness and channels available to broach topics allow the members of the relationship pairing to navigate through the complex changes that occur in each of them.

One approach discussed in our group meetings, originates in the ability of the teacher to read each situation and child who they are asked to teach, and judge at that moment what the best course of action is. A difficult task, filled with the teacher's own background, changes, ideals, misinterpretations, and mistakes and yet it had an evident influence on the relative success of the beginning teachers in this study. The participants that described investing themselves in their schools and students or those who genuinely valued the students as more than a requirement of the label "teacher", described, for example, how much "slack they were cut" by the students. The participants expressed surprise that they could make mistakes and still find the students motivated to attend, learn and participate in class. Christine, for instance, described completely blowing a lesson, and how it actually being a bonding moment between her and her students. The students responded by actively working harder so that she would not look 'bad' in front of her mentor teacher. Abe, by contrast, described a combative relationship with his students during his second practicum which was not surprising since at one point he described his approach as "they will learn this stuff, whether they want to or not". A genuine connection with their students allowed them to circumvent their personal inabilities or the inability of the system to meet each child's needs, and provide a level of individualized instruction that could not be written into curriculum or policy.

Oberski et al. (1999) suggested that preparing teachers for the ever changing and individualized nature of classrooms lies in a rethinking of the philosophy underlying

teacher education programs. They label most current preservice education programs as following a "deficit perspective", in which novice teachers are seen as lacking the skills they need and so an attempt is made to provide them with the skills they need to be successful teachers; pedagogical tools for their toolboxes, which at the beginning are empty. This is seductive, as it is a model that education students have been following as students for most of their lives. Many times in this research the participants referenced what they observed or did as "another tool for the toolbox"; they sought to collect a series of techniques and resources that they could pull out when the situation demanded it. Oberski et al. (1999) believed that an "ability perspective" is a viable alternative and better way to conceptualize preservice education.

> The ability perspective, on the other hand, would build on the knowledge that teachers are experts at forming relationships with pupils and highly motivated to do so. They should therefore be given a tool (like discipline techniques) which allows them to form these relationships effectively in a classroom with 30 pupils. It is a different approach with a different mind set. (Oberski et al., 1999, p. 148)

The ability perspective changes the approach of the program from conceptualizing prospective teachers as "empty", pedagogically speaking, and needing to be given or filled with techniques, skills, and tools; to conceptualizing them as having many useful skills already inherent within them, such as the capacity to form relationships, and building on these in an additive way; a decidedly more constructivist perspective. As a science teacher, I tried as much as possible to take into consideration where my students were at individually when constructing explanations and examples to use for the concepts I was conveying. It seems logical that a similar perspective could be used with prospective teachers. For example, beginning a curriculum and instruction class with the following hypothetical statement (and belief) indicates to prospective teachers that they are not empty vessels that need to be 'filled' with curriculum and pedagogy.

> Okay, don't panic. You have had a lifetime of experiences that will serve you well as teachers. Every time you have engaged with another, tried to teach your siblings something, or tried to motivate your ball team you were inadvertently practicing to be teachers. Whether you know it or not, you are already quite good at the basics of teaching. Now we just have to give you a few specific extras that will fine tune your skills to better suit the subject you are about to be asked to teach, and to get you to embrace the moments you won't anticipate.

After observing the participants cope with a bombardment of last minute changes and unexpected occurrences, those with thick skin, a willingness to work, a stubbornness to not quit, and the ability to roll with the moments seemed to report the most positive outcomes as a result of their experiences. On a daily basis, the participants' relationship experiences were influenced by a host of different factors, from their mentors' mood that day to the weather outside. The participants with the greatest willingness to accept the inevitability of these things and roll with them instead of control or manage them seemed the best equipped to have successful practica and first years of teaching. Whether this is the "good one" wished for by the mentor teacher referred to earlier I do not know, but it is an approach that allowed the complexity of learning to teach to not overwhelm the overworked beginning teachers, and allowed them to emerge from their beginning teaching years with many successes.

The relationship umbrella

During the group meetings, when the participants described their relationships with their students, they began to categorize the relationship as being directed at one of two purposes. It was either a day to day interaction, based around reactions and interpretations to the assorted occurrences of the day, or, it was an attempt to use the relationship as a basis for "making a difference in the lives of the students". Steven commented that he liked to laugh at the jokes of his students, believing it made the day more enjoyable for him and his students. This is an example of a day to day, short term interaction. By contrast, Christine's description of her discussion with a student about what it felt like to be bullied is an example of her attempt to use her relationship with that student to make a change in his life. Seemingly, the relationship with their students being characterized by interactions with different intentions was indicative of the participants responding to two of their basic goals for the student teacher relationship; use it as a means to deal with the pragmatics of the day with efficiency and awareness, or attempt to make a difference in the lives of their students. Regardless of the intention for the relationship, what was notable about these discussed intentions was that it was always directed at the relationship they had with an individual, never the class, and that these moments were

only recognized and eventually shared with the research cohort when the participant intended the interaction. The interactions that contributed to their relationships with their students that occurred unexpectedly and without intention were often not identified as contributing to their relationship, let alone having either a short term or long term impact. This raises an intriguing question.

Consider the following hypothetical and unlikely example. A teacher stands at the front of the class for 45 minutes reading aloud from a book; he does not look at the class, nor does he respond to anything they do. Zero interaction. Would that be an example of teaching without relationship? It is my belief that even this example brings in aspects of relationship, as that teacher through his ignorance of the students is sending a message to them, and the teacher's actions are creating an attitude in the students that will affect whether they received what he is reading or not (not to mention how disrupted the learning would be in a class with no expectations or checks on their behavior). Other examples could be listed, but some aspect of student teacher relationship seems involved when a teacher teaches a class – not necessarily a productive relationship, but a relationship nonetheless. In many ways, the relationship between the teacher and students acts as a form of interpretive paradigm between them; it is the umbrella under which teaching occurs. Levy (1993) introduced the idea that interactions are characterized as operating on two levels: the *report* aspect - what is said; and, the *command* aspect - what is intended or meant. Telling a student to "sit down", with a soft tone and with a smile on your face or yelling "sit down!" while walking aggressively toward the student has the same report aspect, but a completely different command level. Both of these aspects would seem to contribute to the student teacher relationship, but a well developed relationship between student and teachers seems to facilitate a shared perception of the command aspect. Steven's comment that his classes are "getting better at knowing when I am joking and when I am serious" would be an example of how the student teacher relationship was providing the students with an increased ability to interpret the command aspects of what he said.

The pervasive influence of the relationship in teaching was not an awareness with which the participants in this study began. There were many inadvertent compartmentalizing references made by the participants when they were "building the

relationship" as opposed to when they were managing or instructing the class. Or, that the only time that they had to build relationships was when they had time to ask personal questions or express an interest in the extracurricular lives of the students; such as during lunch hour, seat work, or in the breaks between classes. Generally, the participants began this study believing that 'student teacher relationship' meant showing an interest in, and awareness of, the personal lives of their students. It was typified by positive personal connections/revelations that would at the least increase the chances the students would "like" them (and be liked in return) and at best perhaps be "making a difference in the lives of their students" as Christine has stated. Most participants did not consider the negative moments (perhaps when they were correcting inappropriate behavior) or the curricular moments (such as presenting a science concept) as a part of their relationship with their students. There were changes in this belief over the length of the study, as the participants began to see how interconnected the different aspects of teaching are, and evidence that their actions in the "non-relationship moments" were impacting other aspects through the relationship they had with their students. For example, Abe expressed surprise in his inservice journal that "even though I am giving my students shit, they seem to respect me even more". As a rule, however, even by the end of their first inservice semester the participants generally categorized the positive moments with their students as "relationship moments", and the instances that made them feel some negative emotion as "management related". A similar conclusion was derived by Oberski et al. (1999), in which they described how their participants saw relationships as an accomplishment, but discipline and management remained concerns; in other words, they still considered these aspects to be independent of each other.

Not all researchers and stakeholders agree on the relative importance of the student teacher relationship for teaching. Cochran-Smith (2006) and Pianta (1999) are examples of researchers who similarly believe in the centrality and importance of the student teacher relationship in teaching. They assert that relationships are the operative backbone of teaching; that it is the framework (what I have labeled the umbrella) for all classroom activities. Other researchers, such as Aikenhead (2006) suggested that the best approach to teaching is a humanistic approach, an approach that encompasses student teacher relationships, but does not feature it. Still others, like the McGraw-Hill

Leadership Panel (Nov., 2004), which was a panel comprised of a series of university academics who were asked to address American President George Bush's education policy document "No Child Left Behind', said that more emphasis was needed on student accountability (through testing), and an increased funding of computer technology integration and special needs in the schools. There is no reference to student teacher relationships at all. It is not a surprise that different researchers value different aspects of teaching, and it is not my assertion that student teacher relationships are the central issue in teaching. Nonetheless, the student teacher relationships of the participants influenced both them and their teaching, and as such, was an aspect important to them.

Perhaps one reason for the difference in value placed by different educational stakeholders was whether relationships were considered a focus in and of themselves or whether they are assumed inherent in any interaction between two people. Roscoe and Wasiak (2006) discussed an approach to classroom management they have labeled a "problem-solving approach". This is presented in contrast with the more traditional "behavioral approach" in which students' behavior is seen as a product of cause and effect instances. Roscoe and Wasiak's approach explicitly features student teacher relationships as the means by which an awareness of the class is maintained and how appropriate and specific mechanisms are selected to deal with management issues. Student teacher relationships are perceived as both the medium and means for dealing with classroom management issues. The student teacher relationship is assumed to be not only present in any class but also valuable enough to connect instruction with management seamlessly. I do not agree with their perception of relationships as a means to an ulterior motive, as that is suggestive of the relationship being artificial, but their "problem-solving approach" does indicate how pervasive Roscoe and Wasiak believe relationships to be.

Based on the experiences of the participants, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the relative impact that their student teacher relationships had on more objective measures like student achievement in class. In fact this has often been a criticism and focal point of individualized and contextual research – it does not allow for direct connections to be drawn between student achievement and the focus of the study. What was learned, however, was that those participants who described well-developed

relationships with their students seemed better able to create moments that students resonated with and thus more students were motivated to 'pull the trigger' on their own learning. These teachers offered an assortment of triggers to their students, trying to find ways to get different students to engage with the material they were presenting. Not only did a strong relationship give the teacher a better chance to determine which triggers to offer, it also encouraged the students to listen to and embrace what the teacher was presenting and thus they were more likely to engage with one of the options, and learn.

More energy than carrots

The relative legitimacy and power that the participants had as preservice teachers was a concern voiced by the participants often throughout the research, and for the participants who went on to become inservice teachers during the research period, it remained a concern. Comments such as "I am the new kid on the block", "being forced to pay my dues", and "I am surprised I even got a classroom; I am totally at the bottom of the teacher totem pole" all indicated that legitimacy and power were concerns for beginning teachers. Being asked to keep reflective journals subject to review by university facilitators, daily evaluations from their mentor teacher, and being told that the mentor needed to approve the lessons before they were taught, tended to be interpreted by the participants as indications that they were not trusted. Ironically, many of these mechanisms are actually support mechanisms for the beginning teachers; intended as vehicles to discuss the issues plaguing them with more experienced colleagues. Above all else, knowing that their mentor teacher would eventually write their final evaluation – an evaluation that serves a pivotal role when they apply for their first inservice teaching positions, placed tremendous pressure on the participants to conform to and obey the wishes of their mentor teachers. Based on the data from this research as well as years of teaching preservice teachers, some challenges faced by preservice teachers are:

- Little teaching experience, but lots of expectations for what it will be like.
- In most cases just a few years older than the students they will teach.
- Mandated checks at every turn in which they need to explain and defend the choices they have made for each lesson.
- Limited familiarity with the curriculum, the subject, lesson pacing and how to translate concepts into living lessons.

- Intimidated by the idea that they have to manage classroom behavior.
- A desire to make a difference in the lives of the students and to be liked and respected by the students.
- Hit and miss compatibility with their mentor teachers' priorities and personality.
- A relatively short amount of time to learn to become a teacher.
- Little awareness of how to combine all of the aspects of teaching into the seamless entity that they perceive experienced teachers to be.
- A pressure to take on as many extra-curricular activities as allowed; distinguishing themselves from the others and increasing their chances of getting a job.
- Maintaining lives, loves, and extra-curricular pursuits outside of school that continued through the course of their teaching periods.

Certainly this characterization does not portray all preservice teachers, and it was remarkable how quickly the participants became comfortable with teaching as they gained experience. I have presented this list not to demonstrate how raw these preservice teachers were, but to illustrate the value of the three qualities that the participants employed to offset these and other challenges.

First, they have a great willingness to do what it takes to be great teachers. They do not have the efficiency and 'tricks' of a more experienced teacher, but the participants were willing to spend as many hours as it took preparing for and anticipating each lesson. I came to label this phenomenon as "more energy than sense" (even though it is experience and not 'sense' that they lack). The results were lessons that typically were unbelievably well thought out, with lesson strategies designed to elicit connection and engagement from their students; this usually came at the cost of two to three times as much time preparing for a lesson than it took to teach. What they lacked in experience, they made up for in willingness, work, and time. Two of the participants illustrated the importance of this preparation period; they described horrific experiences that resulted when their mentor teachers removed their capacity to prepare for their lessons. Both Dan and Kelly discussed how they spent hours preparing for amazing lessons, learning the content, and anticipating how the students might respond to each component, only to have their mentor, just minutes before class, state that they had decided the class should do something different that day. Literally minutes before class, they were asked to throw together a lesson on material they had not seen before. The result was these student teachers stepped in front of the class unprepared and insecure with the lesson, were

perceived by the students as unsure and incompetent, and the lesson was reduced to combative classroom management. This happened on many occasions to both of these two teachers. When asked, the mentors explained that they wanted to be sure *their* students were being given material they thought was important, and in one case, the mentor justified her actions by saying that a teacher needs to be able to adapt on the fly, and thus she was teaching the student teacher how to be adaptive. Knowingly, or inadvertently, these mentor teachers had set their student teachers up to fail and the result was a dramatic shift in the classroom reception of these beginning teachers (the relationship) as well as a dramatic loss of confidence in Kelly and Dan. On a side note, they later reflected that had it not been for the horrified surprise by the research cohort, and subsequent assurance that this was not "normal" they both would have quit.

The second capacity that beginning teachers bring with them, is the acceptance that they are going to make mistakes and that they have a lot to learn. They do not expect themselves to be as effective as the mentor teachers they are replacing temporarily. As the research progressed it was amazing how powerful this willingness to accept their fallibility was – it was a form of psychological safety net. Even though they made mistakes daily, they generally regarded these as opportunities to learn, and seemed quite comfortable seeking the forgiveness of their classes for their "rookie" mistakes. Some even described how their willingness to be human and make mistakes was endearing them to their students and it strengthened their relationship. Although the two participants who were teaching science classes that had a provincial external exam did describe feeling more pressure in those classes to not make mistakes. This also explained how the transition from preservice to inservice teacher for some of the participants was actually quite difficult – they had lost the safety net of believing they were expected or allowed to make mistakes. Now that they were 'real' teachers, they expected themselves to no longer be so fallible. Ben described how he anticipated that his life history and experiences would speed up this transition from fallible rookie to seamless veteran, and that he now is coming to a hard realization that he might have been wrong as can be seen in the following quote.

> I believe a main issue in my dismay as a first year teacher is the gap between what I envisioned how I would perform to how I actually performed. I came into the teaching profession with an expectation that my maturity and past

> experiences would launch me quickly into being a successful teacher who would be able to establish positive relationships with students and who would be a subject specialist that could develop engaging lessons to stretch and develop student learning. I am finding that now that I am a teacher I am still not able to do this; there is still a gap, and in my mind, it is still a wide one. (Ben, first inservice semester)

The belief that someday they would become what they believe an experienced teacher to be reminded me of the cartoons in which a carrot is dangled on the end of stick in front of an animal to motivate them move forward, a carrot which is attached to them in some way. Every step the animal takes forward, the carrot also moves forward that same step – it is nothing more then continuing a forward motivation on the empty promise of attaining something they want. This, in many ways, was the story of these beginning teachers. They were constantly being placed in new circumstances for which they had little skill, and usually in situations that a more experienced teacher would have attempted to avoid. As they struggled through these humbling circumstances, it was their belief that they would get better, the situation would get better, or they would be given a different assignment that buoyed their spirits and kept them going. Classroom management is an example of how these beginning teachers often described feeling as though they were barely maintaining order, but also believed that they would get better and that at some future point it would no longer give them as much grief. The same logic was applied to prep time, marking time, building relationships, professional development, and so on. This was not new – it was the same logic that was applied to their circumstances as student teachers – except then, it was because they were told to expect to be incompetent, powerless, and that they would gain the skills they would need with experience and when they were assigned their own classrooms (when they became inservice teachers). As Ben succinctly commented, "At some future time (maybe next semester), I will have the time to make this more engaging for my students."

The third 'challenge offset' that the beginning teachers employed was simply a combination of the two previous coping mechanisms – their willingness to do what it takes and the belief they would get better. Essentially they believed that their current experiences were finite. Despite their apparent exhaustion, the participants believed they could keep up the work ethic and energy expenditure long enough to last the 4 or 8 week

practica. Even once some of the participants were inservice teachers, they still sought the boundary for their current situation as they discussed how long until the end of the semester or the school year. As preservice teachers they were willing to pay a higher price than more experienced teachers to attain the same level, simply because they knew that they were done in a matter of weeks, or to borrow a euphemism, they would not have to sleep in the bed that they were making. Once they became inservice teachers, they were now forced to accept responsibility and accountability for their classes and their stress increased. They could no longer give their classes back to the "real" teacher, but even then the participants hoped and believed that the 'survival stage' of teaching was finite.

I attended the International Conference on Teacher Education held in November of 2006, and made note of how often the proposals and suggestions made for teaching were put forward with the proviso that they would only work for teachers not in the survival stage of teaching; in other words, when they had the time and awareness to do more than get through their day or week. There seemed to be a general acknowledgement that the experiences of teachers in their first few years of teaching are not representative of what later years of teaching are like. Thus, the goal of presenting beginning teachers with components not applicable to them in their survival stage seemed to be directed at planting a "what if?" seed. Some variation of the following hypothetical attitude; "Ok, this is what I have to do right now to survive, but what if…?" This attitude leaves the door open for questioning, reflection, growth, and change; the potential for teachers to reach beyond current teaching practices, even though they need to be able to understand and use these practices to function in school systems as they are now. Goodland (1990) actually suggested this should be the primary function of preservice education programs – provide prospective teachers with a series of experiences and inclinations so they are not condemned to reinforce and repeat an education system that almost everyone would admit is flawed. An alternative that I heard from my participants was the expression "some day". There was a general belief that what they were doing at the moment (and why) was largely driven by the unique pressures and incompetence associated with their experience level, but *some day* it would be both different and better. In many ways, it was this hope that allowed the short comings of their situation to be dealt with and accepted.

Whether by choice or circumstance, the participants were gaining many patterns of behavior and teacher identity during the period that teaching was the busiest and arguably the hardest – during the survival phase. It may not be so easy, however, to wake one day after making it through the survival stage, and abandon all of the patterns they adopted to allow them to survive, which when originally employed, were seen as compromises and not the way they would choose. So often their choices and reactions originated not with what they knew or wanted, but because they were doing what was needed to meet an external expectation and survive. These beginning teachers hoped that at some point in the future they would have the chance to be more than the compromised teacher they believed themselves to be. I am not convinced that they will be able to (or even should?) revert to the more idealized belief they had for themselves as teachers. Perhaps it is not about abandoning what they have learned to become, so much as it is continuing to become more than what they are. I return to Ben, who upon reflection of his preservice years, found hope in the education program he completed and the mentor teachers he was assigned because it showed him what a teacher could be "beyond the hell" he described he went through and that it was possible to do more than just survive as a teacher.

It is not the university's fault; is it their responsibility?

Contrary to the amount of research literature on the subject, the participants did not attribute many of their student teacher relationship experiences to having an origin within their preservice education programs. Other than brief uses of jargon they had learned during their course work, or bemoaning the requirement to attend meetings at the University which interrupted their practica, the only real concern about their preservice programs was that they could have used more preparation in specific and contextual ways. For instance, Emily discussed how she wished her program had more on managing junior high boys; or, Ben commented that his physics classes at University did not teach him the concepts the way that he now had to teach it to his physics students. When asked about this lack of reference to the University, the consensus was that the participants conceptualized their on-campus components as distinct from their practica; that the

university was a "hoop" they jumped through so they could get into the classroom and "learn to teach by teaching". Thus their teaching and relationship experiences could not be traceable back to the University – these experiences were a function of their teaching, thus they fall under the domain of their practica. Also, lacking a frame of reference, the participants did not know that their preservice education programs could be any other way than what they experienced. They did not have a comparative framework to make judgments about what might have changed had they had, for instance, an internship like some other education programs employ; it did not occur to them to think in that context. In my Masters study (Hirschkorn, 2004), I found that frame of reference was an important factor in determining the range of feedback drawn from research participants. In this research physics students were asked "what is the best way to increase your conceptual understanding in physics?" Their suggestions were found to be limited to only those strategies they had previous experience with since they lacked a frame of reference to reach beyond the range of classroom strategies they had been exposed to during their schooling.

The participants' primary concern that the on-campus component of their education program could have provided specific instruction in what they perceive as a deficiency is ironic, since it is a concern that universities would have difficulty in addressing. Hypothetically, a program could be designed to prepare a prospective teacher for a specific teaching context. However, that same student just a semester later may not be served by that program; the context and specific needs of that teacher may have changed. It is a difficult mandate preservice education programs have; to address the pedagogical needs and contexts of all the preservice teachers every semester. Emily for instance did her first practicum in a junior high science class and her second practicum in a high school biology class. As it turned out, she eventually was given a job teaching junior high science and she commented that her high school practicum experiences were of little use to her; she was struggling to remember the strategies and mechanisms she used in her first practicum semester. She believed that had the practica been reversed she would have been much better prepared for her job, and partly blames the University. This is unreasonable since the university cannot design a program that looks into the future

and offers program choices that will serve each teacher in their eventual teaching positions.

Education programs world wide share a remarkable similarity in design, being composed of practically-oriented methods classes and student teaching experiences, as well as more theoretically-based educational foundations and psychology classes (Kincheloe, 2004). The relative strengths and weaknesses of these components are well debated in the literature (Hitz and Roper, 1986; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Goodland (1990); Breault, 1991; and Gordon, 2004; etc.), but virtually all education programs continue to be characterized by these components. The 13 participants in this research originated from an education program with the above described components. These participants are all unique, originating from different contexts and having their own beliefs and philosophical approaches but yet they shared a common preservice education University experience. The participants' preservice education programs and the experiences of entering a specific school for the first time had an impact on these developing teachers, even though for the most part the participants remained largely ignorant of the impact their programs may have had at this point in their careers.

A number of researchers, notably Goodland (1990), suggested that preparing prospective teachers for the pragmatics and contexts of the classroom is not the role of the on-campus component of preservice education programs; that it is the domain of the practical component. They postulate that the on-campus components of their education programs be the place that beginning teachers gain an appreciation for broader issues in education and that they be given the perspectives and attitudes that allow them to reach beyond the education system as it is and make it into something more. To do this, he suggests drawing on the strength of the university system, the integration of research and educational history, to embed within the education students the capacity to exceed their pedagogical predecessors. This is a seductive idea as it allows the university to maintain a predominantly research orientation, as well as rationalize the compartmentalized nature of the on-campus and practica components of education programs. However, this is not a perspective shared by all researchers.

Kincheloe (2004) for example, discussed how the separation of theoretical from practical components in education program design is actually victimizing education students.

> Teacher education students are, of course, the most victimized players in the two-culture profession. As they find themselves ensnared in the middle of the conflict, they often encounter conflict between what they were told to do in their university courses and the demands of the school district in which they are teaching. (Kincheloe, 2004, p.22)

Kincheloe goes on to discuss the ways in which knowledge production, curriculum development, epistemologies of practice, and even cultural contexts may be lost when these two cultures are not bridged.

The participants in this research were not aware of any debate in the research literature regarding the relative value of the components that are included in teacher education programs; their programs were 'normal' for them, accepted as "the way it is", and for the most part they remained focused on dealing with the challenges, rarely seeking to blame their programs. It is difficult to attribute fault to these program offerings since inevitably many program decisions are made on the basis of logistics, economics, or efficiency; decisional foundations that all teachers use on a daily basis. Nonetheless, some of the preservice program components did influence the relationship experiences of the participants, and some examples are presented below. These examples are drawn from the related experiences of the participants as well as my awareness of the preservice education program in which they were enrolled.

- The pairing of the mentor and student teacher was pivotal in the eventual experiences of the student teacher (as has already been noted). Yet, the basis for the pairing of these participants was geographic (giving the student teachers placements relatively close to their home), subject and level specific (matching the subject and grade level specialties of the mentor and student teacher), and logistical (more student teachers to place than mentor teachers available to receive them). In the short term there is no solution to this dilemma, but it perhaps speaks to the significance of attempts to increase student enrolments in faculties of education in response to societal pressure to address teacher shortages. If the mentor is as important to the experiences of student teachers, as was seen in this research and as Zuckerman (1999) and other researchers have suggested, perhaps the basis for the pairing should be reviewed.

- The length of the practical components of their education programs was described by the participants as having a significant impact on their relationship

experiences. The longer the practica, the more genuine the relationship the participants described having with their students. Phil, for instance, expressed frustration that just as he was really starting to feel like the teacher, connect with the kids, and gain some comfort in his role in the school, he had to return to the university to complete coursework. I recognize that once again there are a number of factors that impact the length of placements. However, most of the participants felt that a longer practicum would have better prepared them for the rigors of inservice teaching even though many of them were also happy it was over once it was.

- University course offerings are typically modular; students choose which courses to take each semester to meet program requirements. These courses may have prerequisites, but are typically stand alone courses. In the education programs of the participants, they do not have the choice of which courses to take in the semesters when they are student teaching. The courses are part of a constructed program with the intention to provide courses that will aid in their teaching. However, these courses do not depend on each other for what is taught, and due to a large turn over of instructors who teach the classes, what is taught often changes from semester to semester, and even from class to class. The result is that the participants reported that their experiences in a particular class were quite different than their fellow students, and they did not feel that these courses were part of a program – more like they were a series of requirements that needed to be taken before they were allowed to begin their practica. There was some value placed on what they learned, as evidenced in their use of terms and examples originating in these classes, but the participants remained unaware of how these classes connected to each other.

Elliott et al. (1999) did a study in which he asked preservice teachers to reflect on their education programs and make recommendations for what they would change. The following list is the recommendations that emerged from their study.

- Lengthen the programs.
- Minimum 6 weeks in a single placement.
- Start practicums at beginning of school year.
- A model of reflection should be provided to preservice teachers.
- Provide an opportunity to select areas of further study after returning from practicums.
- Give options in placements, so that alternative programs can be selected by students if they choose.
- Allow students to select their mentors, as well as provide and discuss clear guidelines on what mentoring relationships are.

It is notable that the length of practicum, mentor selection, and program options emerged as concerns of his participants; findings that were observed to influence the participants of this research as well. Preservice programs are directed by the context and community it

serves, as well as pragmatic logistical requirements, thus there should be variation among preservice education programs. The idea of allowing prospective teachers some ability to modify their programs based on their identification of personal deficiencies that they realize while student teaching is intriguing. Giving prospective teachers some control over which mentor they are paired with as well as having student teaching commence at the beginning of the school semester are also ideas worth consideration.

Teacher education programs are designed to influence beginning teachers, whether they are aware of that influence or not. It is a difficult mandate for these programs to meet the specific needs of each education student, but that does not remove the responsibility of the education program faculty and administrators to periodically revisit the program and ask whose needs the program serves. Is it the needs of the teachers they are preparing or the various other pressures the education program must address? Aspects, such as economics, teacher shortages, teacher attrition, availability of placements and faculty, and so on, are all considerations that influence the teacher education program that each University offers. Perhaps by becoming more transparent through offering explanations for the choices being made, the program would empower the teachers it is preparing to accept why their circumstances are the way they are, and to be better prepared to work with the university to make the education program a success.

Reductionist Fatima becomes herself

Walking into your first classroom as the 'teacher' is a daunting experience. Here are a few examples drawn from the first practicum journals of the participants illustrating this.

- Did I anticipate everything?
- I hope they understand the examples I chose.
- Will the white board markers run out and where are more if I need them?
- I wonder if they will they respect me; hell, will they even listen to me?
- I don't know how I should dress.
- What will my mentor think?
- Am I as good as the other student teachers?
- Should I let them go the bathroom, and how many at a time?
- I hope the students don't treat me as bad as I have treated student teachers over the years.

In the midst of these examples and the other initial concerns mentioned by the participants, two dominant patterns emerged. First, teaching was conceptualized as a series of distinct techniques and strategies that could be mastered, and were combined to create a lesson. Second, that it was their responsibility to think of everything, deal with everything, and the relative success or failure of the lesson was their responsibility.

Larson (1995) introduced educational researchers to Fatima. Fatima was a high school science student who was 'successful' in science but attributed her success to two strategies; rote memorization and going through the motion of learning without being intellectually engaged. She did well in her science courses without ever attaining a conceptual understanding of the canonical science content she was being asked to learn. Aikenhead (2006) used "Fatima's rules" to explain how students can attain success in classes even though they do not value the content they are being taught, or as a mechanism for the students to resist the "cultural indoctrination" of the subject they are 'learning'. In the following example, participant Taylor demonstrated how he also employed Fatima's rules at times as a student at university, when he described what his attitude toward most of his education classes was - "I got them [the instructors] to tell me what they wanted and how they wanted it, and then I gave it back to them exactly the way they told me. I didn't care about the class, but I had to take it, and still do well in it." Unfortunately reducing learning to 'finding ways to succeed despite not valuing what is being taught' may be quite common in education. Aikenhead (2006) suggested that the employment of Fatima's rules may be an indication that the content of courses (particularly science courses) has no value, meaning, or application in the lives of students and thus is not being learned in any transferable way. I introduce Fatima's rules here because it describes quite well the strategy that many of the participants used to reach the point at which their practica began. The education courses taken by the participants were rarely described as valuable to them as teachers and they sought to complete them successfully without actually understanding how what they were learning applied to them as teachers in the classroom. More often than not, this reduced a substantial amount of what they learned during their preservice education program to memorized content, and thus they could list any number of different theories and lists,

without knowing how these things would affect them as teachers. Coupled with the initially overwhelming number of responsibilities of a teacher and a tendency to try to separate these responsibilities into discrete and manageable packets of information to be mastered and you have a fairly accurate description of the starting point described by most of the participants in this research.

The participants' approach to relationships with their students was similar to the approach they used to manage classes or write terrific lessons. They wanted a "good" relationship with their students and to be liked and respected. They even believed that relationships were an important part of teaching. However, relationships were originally described quite technically. "I met them at the door, because that is a good opportunity to build a relationship with your students", or, "I make it a point to say something to each student every day" are just two examples of how they approached relationships as a series of intentions that were responded to by the students and acted as the means to building relationships. It was not an easy task for a student teacher to build a trusting and genuine relationship with their students in a matter of weeks; particularly since it was something they had little experience with as teachers. Nonetheless, generally speaking, relationships were conceptualized as just one of the many 'masteries' they needed to learn and employ to be successful teachers. This compartmentalized and 'mastery' approach to relationships was what changed as they gained experience. The object of their attention shifted from looking within, to a focus on the students and the context around them. Almost literally, one day they looked up from their desks at the front of the class and discovered the students in their classes looking back at them.

Kagan (1992) reviewed the literature on the professional growth of beginning teachers, and found that it wasn't until the novice teacher resolved their images of self as teacher could they begin to turn their focus outwards and concentrate on what pupils were learning from their academic tasks. In other words, that the novice teachers' "knowledge of self, classrooms, and pupils does not appear to evolve separately" (p. 148). The student teacher relationship may help to facilitate this process. Ben, for example, described in his journal how his relationship with his junior high math classes and the relative success he had in getting them to behave and do well on quizzes seemed to be tied to his confidence as a teacher. Yet, he was at a loss to determine if these different aspects of his teaching

somehow evolved together or separately. He does state, though, that he has become much better at reading his students and judging the impact of his actions as a result. Relationships may act as the interpretive paradigm which the beginning teachers use to perceive their pedagogical context and to judge the effect of their actions and choices on the students. Note in the following quote from Flores (2003), how important she sees the perception of student reactions are in their professional growth and transformation of teachers.

> Teacher change was very much influenced by the students whose (positive or negative) reactions impacted greatly upon new teachers' attitudes to teaching and sense of self-efficacy, which, along with teacher socialization in the workplace, emerged as major factors mediating the process of altering their beliefs and practices. This has implications for the (trans)formation of teacher professional identity. (p. 24)

Flores concluded that changes to a teacher's identity occur in given social space, and thus are negotiated and bound up in the context in which they are used. Since the student teacher relationship is a key part of this "social context" in which their changing identity is negotiated, it stands to reason that as the identity changes, so does the perception and value for the student teacher relationship. In both an observed and described way, the student teacher relationships of the participants changed as they gained experience. What follows is a list of some evident changes to their relationship orientation; that is, the list summarizes the student teacher relationship orientations of the participants as related near the end of the research period. The participants' orientation no longer resembles a systematic application of techniques to assorted stimuli (a cause and effect approach), but rather a holistic awareness of context and the individual. The participants recognized that they as teachers had a role to play in the classroom relationships, but that the students and context also had an important role to play. Let me stipulate, however, that this list of changed perspectives toward student teacher relationships was not the orientation of all of the participants. This is a list of observed and described perspectives represented to different extents by the participants.

- Relationships happen whether you want them to or not – often in unanticipated and unexpected ways.
- Relationships take time.
- It is possible to have relationships with both the class and the individuals who make up the class and these are often different and not indicative of each other.

- The relationships can originate with either the student or teacher (instead of just teacher), and will be perceived differently by each. Rarely is either person in that relationship pairing omnisciently aware of the relationship – they have only their own perception of it.
- Moments that contribute to the relationships occur anywhere there is contact between the teacher and student.
- Students and teachers are real people with lives and experiences outside of class.
- Relationships are the cause of both your best and worst moments, and they almost always have an affective impact on both the student and teacher.
- Relationships change from day to day and person to person; they do not become "good" or "bad" and just stay that way – they are earned.
- Relationships are a key in interpreting the impact teachers have on their students and vice versa.
- Relationships can cause beginning teachers to modify their behaviors and even identities, but who they are as teachers is more than the sum of their interactions and relationships. Some aspect of the beginning teacher is carried across context and individual relationship.
- Day-to-day context and the teachers' obligations often nudge the relationship in unintended directions.

The relationships that people have in their everyday lives are rarely constructed according to a plan; they are rarely products of intention, technique application, and desired outcomes. Relationships are messy, situational, ever-changing, and complex. The participants, by beginning to realize and embrace this perspective, seem to have undergone an evolution in their student teacher relationships. This evolution generally and ironically began with an approach to relationships originating with their experiences as students and a preconception of what a teacher is supposed to be. It ended with a return to a classroom persona that more closely resembled who they are outside of the class; that is, a return to themselves. A remarkable evolution when their complex practica situations and steepness of the teacher learning curve are considered.

Once, somebody asked Robert Schumann to explain the meaning of a certain piece he had just played on the piano. What Robert Schumann did was sit back down at the piano and play the piece of music again.

David Markson (1988)

Synthesis

Ben came to teaching later in life than the other participants. In his 30's, with a wife and two children, Ben decided to become a teacher because he enjoyed working with children and because it was always something that he loved and was good at doing. He believed that by being a bit more mature and 'life experienced' it would situate him well to cope with the trials and tribulations of teaching that he anticipated and remembered as a student. He had worked for years as a retail manager, and having to quit and take on the relative financial limitations of returning to university required him to finish his education degree expediently and find work quickly after graduating. As an after degree education student, Ben was able to design his program so that he did two semesters of on campus course work, followed by two semesters of successive practica, whereupon he would be eligible to be hired as a teacher.

Ben's first practicum was in a high school physics class, with a mentor teacher who Ben felt was respected by the students, and who was content to let Ben assume as much responsibility as he wanted during that semester; he could succeed or fail based on his own merits with little interference from his mentor. This generally speaking was received well by Ben, as he wanted the responsibility of setting his own destiny with the students. Ben's semester could be summarized as learning the basics of teaching within an environment of trust from the mentor and stress about whether he was doing a thorough and timely job of delivering the physics content (one of his insecurities, since he is a math major and science minor). Ben did not feel like he had a lot of time in class to do much more than work through the course content, but used as many opportunities as possible to speak with the students on a personal level either during seatwork time, or in the halls between classes. He did not feel as though he was doing much relationship building except outside of class, and tended to compartmentalize the different aspects of teaching; instructing while writing on board, managing as needed, and relationship building through intention and only when it didn't interfere with instructional time.

Ben's second practicum was in a smaller, junior high school where he was assigned to teach math and science. Once again he was placed with a mentor he was respected by and respected; a mentor who had a reputation for being liked by the students, but also who did not put up with any trouble in his class. Almost immediately, Ben lost the stress of feeling subject challenged, and gained an immense amount of confidence as a subject 'expert' relative to the students. Most notably in this semester was the relatively seamless integration of the assorted components of teaching. Ben seemed to have found a way to combine building relationships while instructing and managing his classes, treating them as different components of the same thing – teaching. He praised his school, his mentor, loved teaching and his students, confiding in me that he hoped that he would be able to eventually work at this school after he graduated. Ben received a glowing evaluation from his mentor and he was able to parlay this evaluation and his

experience in the school system the following semester into a fulltime one year teaching position at a high school in the city. This met one of Ben's requirements, that he find work immediately upon graduation.

Ben's first inservice teaching position was a different story, however. Being on a temporary one year contract, the new teacher on staff, and hired to teach in both the math and science departments, Ben was given courses to teach that no other teacher wanted. Additionally, because he was a member of two different departments he was never really adopted by either one, and thus lived in a sort of departmental limbo (even though this also meant he had twice as many departments meetings to attend). Perhaps what was most difficult about his first year was the transience that was forced upon Ben. He was given a work space in one of the science preparation areas, but was not given his own class, and every class he taught was in a different room. This forced Ben to carry all of his materials with him (and to figure out what to carry), to have only three minutes to move to his next room through over-crowded halls (the break time between classes), and to have no sense of belonging or ownership for the room in which he was teaching. Ben was arriving for each class, more often than not, behind his students and was already minutes into the class before he could even pull his material from his carry-on suitcase and get started. Not only were the classes challenging by most teachers' standards, but he was also forced to interact with the students in a rushed and content driven way. He had no class time to interact with students beyond instructional time – he did not even have a place where students could come to him for extra help or a conversation. Coupled with the time requirement of learning a new system, teaching fulltime and instructing courses for the first time (which demanded Ben be at the school and away from his family), Ben remarked that he was being denied access to the aspect that brought him to education in the first place – a relationship with his students. Exacerbating his situation was the awareness that he did not even know if he had a job the following year and what he would be teaching. He did not know if all of the work he was doing for his classes would even be courses he would teach in successive years. Thus, not surprisingly Ben began to contemplate leaving teaching. As he described it, "I am being forced to become every teacher I ever hated as a student and this is not what I wanted when I decided to become a teacher – I would rather be a salesman". At the end of the data collection period (February), Ben had not yet been told if he had a job the following year and in an honest admission, he did not know if he wanted one. If it were not for meeting the financial needs of his family and a justification for his career change into teaching, I do not think Ben would continue to be a teacher; a deep and tragic irony given how wonderful a teacher he is capable of being.

Ben's story above is an example of circumstances potentially leading up to Ben becoming a teacher attrition statistic. Whose fault is it? His? Was this bad luck or is it 'the nature of the beast' that many beginning teachers have to 'pay their dues'? Did Ben's preservice education program prepare him for the teaching world that he entered? Could it? What was the role of the student teacher relationship in his story? These are all questions that I have asked myself in response to Ben's experiences but also the many other experiences

described to me over the length of this research by the other participants. After two years of gathering the experiences of the participants, this Synthesis section is where I speak about what I have learned in this journey, and want to offer my insights to others working and living in this pedagogical landscape.

Even with all of the data collected in a two year longitudinal study it is not possible for me to define what a 'good' or 'bad' student teacher relationship is – for one, it is too subjective and contextual a concept to define or to prescribe a procedure that can be implemented to obtain one (a critical theorist would suggest it has moral implications as well). This did not prevent the participants from describing their experiences as 'good' or bad though, and to set "good" relationships as a goal to attain. Intentionally this definition was left to each participant to derive and apply. What is possible to draw from this research, however, is a characterization of the experiences that contributed to the student teacher relationships of the participants. What factors affected the student teacher relationships, both positively and negatively, that were a product of their beginning teacher period? Interpersonal relationships exist in any profession, but teaching as a profession may be unique because of the scale of the numbers of relationships and because of the chronological, intellectual, and emotional ages of the students. In so many ways, teachers become representative adults in the lives of their students – at times surrogate parents, at times role models, and even at times authority figures and rule enforcers. Sit in on any school class and judge if the evident relationship between the teacher and the students is the same as the relationship that exists between a doctor and patient, a lawyer and client, or a store owner and customer. Teaching as a profession may be unique in the pervasive impact of relationships on the teacher and the students, and thus, there is value in describing the aspects that may influence it and even more importantly, how.

Many factors have been discussed in this research that were described as improving the possibility of a participant fostering constructive relationships, such as, genuine caring, being valued, a supportive and informed mentor, etc. The student teacher relationships of the participants had an evident and powerful influence on their teaching experiences. Geelan (2003) gives an example of how relationships can influence the

learning of students when he contrasts the student teacher relationships of two teachers he worked with during his research.

> If, as was the case for Carolyn, the relationship between teacher and students breaks down, all of the innovative strategies in the world will not guarantee learning. On the other hand if, as in Candace's case, the relationship between teacher and students and teacher and colleagues are strong, mutually respectful, caring and loving, it is possible for many other constraints to be constructively addressed. (p.142)

Geelan (2003) discusses how the relationship between students and teachers sets the tone for the other activities in a classroom. If the relationship is constructive it dramatically increases the possibility that the students will "buy into" the message being delivered by the teacher and it is more probable that lasting learning will occur. Other researchers, such as Wallace (1993), operating on the conclusion that student teacher relationships are an important and valuable component of teaching, offer strategies to improve the relationship. These strategies include taking an immediate interest in your class and of course the individuals in it, demonstrating that you like the subject, the class and teaching, and conveying to the students a clear and consistent set of expectations of them. Wallace (1993) states:

> The difference between those teachers who swam into calm and those who sank under disorder appeared to be related to three broad features of their behavior: the survivors got to know the class quickly, they demonstrated in some ways that they liked teaching the pupils, and their expectations of pupils were generally clear and consistent. Pupils felt that they could interact in predictable ways and they had some idea of what the teacher wanted. (Wallace, 1993, p. 33)

Pianta (1999) added more entries to this discussion of teacher behaviors that Wallace has argued promotes a strong student teacher relationship. Pianta specified the ability to read and respond appropriately to the signals of the students, offer assistance as necessary, and set appropriate limits for students' behavior. Morganett (2001) further suggested that teachers should remain focused on inappropriate behaviors when managing the class without tying the behavior to statements of the students' character. He also recommended that the teacher create an environment where students feel safe to be themselves and where they are willing to do what it takes to achieve their goals.

Is there a common quality to the recommended teacher behaviors identified by the different researchers in the preceding paragraph? Could an informed mentor or instructor for these beginning teachers reduce their recommendations to a specific approach or philosophy that encapsulates these behaviors? Morganett (2001) would likely summarize these suggested behaviors and actions as representative of teachers legitimately caring for each individual in their class. Morganett derived a list of specific strategies the teacher can use to convey this caring perspective to the students.

- Talk with and listen to students individually and collectively.
- Ask students about events going on in their lives.
- When discussing issues or current events, be sure to remain focused on what the students think and feel.
- Speak with students while they are working on in-class work – make it constructive and positive and make sure that you get to speak with every student over time.
- Greet or wish students well at beginning or end of week.
- Speak with students when the class is disrupted with school events (assemblies, testing, or whatever).
- At the end of the week, discuss a topic of students' choosing as a reward for work done well. (p. 261)

Reading through the list of recommended behaviors and strategies above, I find myself measuring my own teaching against these suggestions. We have all been students at some stage; the fact that this list creates a desire to measure up to these recommendations suggests that these strategies are recognized by the student within me as starting points for developing relationships with my students.

Recommendations

Based on the experiences of the participants in this research I have derived a list of recommendations that in my opinion would allow future beginning teachers to potentiate the opportunities of building relationships with their students. These recommendations are not intended as a critique of any particular group or agency, but rather, stem from the experiences of the participants as well as my insights on the topic. For each of the recommendations I have specified who I see is most appropriately equipped to address the recommendation.

1) Preservice teachers tend to believe that the on-campus components of their teacher education programs are at best equipping them with an assortment of

"tools" that they might use as teachers. The practica are more likely to be considered the forum in which they will "learn to teach by teaching". This is typically reinforced by their mentors' perspectives. The on-campus components of their education programs need to not only be connected to each other and the practica, but this connection needs to be made explicit for the preservice teachers. Preservice teachers are often confused as to the value or implications of what they are being taught at the University for their teaching during or after the practica. These connections need to be made explicit both for university instructors by the program leaders and administrators, and for preservice education students by their instructors. Additionally, to foster investment in the relationships with and learning outcomes of the students who preservice teachers teach during their practica, the practica should begin at the beginning of school semester, and continue for the entire semester. Some preservice programs have done this by making the preservice practicum a semester long internship. Other programs have student teachers teach one or two days a week for a semester – with the remaining days being used to complete and integrate on-campus components. The implementation of this recommendation would require consultation between the education faculty placement services and the representatives of the school jurisdictions that accept student teachers.

2) The mentor is a key person in the development of student teachers. The value and impact of the relationship between the mentor and the beginner cannot be overstated. Some consideration by placement officers of the compatibility of the mentor and student teacher needs to be a part of the pairing process in addition to geographic proximity, subject specialty and logistics. Information sessions could be created so that the student teachers must be made aware of what the mentor and student experiences are so that some consideration is given to the risk, trust and perspective of the mentor. Having said that, mentors should be encouraged by university representatives to allow the prospective teachers to make the class their own and fail from time to time. However, mentors need to be there when asked for help by the student teachers. The mentors need to explicitly outline their curricular expectations for the student teachers and provide ongoing, extensive feedback as well.

3) Establishing the legitimacy of the beginning teacher early and consistently is important. Beginning teachers need to be welcomed to the school by the administration and made aware of the school's routines and discipline policies and structures early on. Essentially, beginning teachers need to be treated as another teacher in both words and actions (including the distribution of keys, supervision, room assignments). Beginning teachers need to be treated with respect by colleagues and administration; not as individuals who must pay dues before they are addressed as colleagues with skills and perspectives. The hardship of the beginning years is more than enough 'dues' without the permanent staff exacerbating the situation. Recommendations and case studies could be discussed with mentors during an inservice which illustrates the powerful impact that

mentoring has on student teachers. This inservice should be a requirement of being a mentor teacher.

4) Beginning teachers rarely know if the specific circumstances of their day or relationship are "normal"; if they are the cause or if they are expected to derive a mechanism to cope with the circumstance. In short, their limited teaching experience denies them a frame of reference by which to contextualize their situation. Through the creation of trusted and consistent cohorts, beginning teachers are provided some capacity to contextualize their "I" experiences within the "we" experiences of other beginning teachers. Additionally, an experienced teacher needs to be a member of this cohort as beginners often require the perspective of a colleague who has managed similar circumstances. These cohorts are a support group and they normalize the beginners' experiences and allow them to grow as teachers as they connect with the experiences of others to the context in which they live and teach. These cohorts would be created according to the preservice teachers' subject major, would meet regularly and should remain consistent throughout the students' preservice education program

5) There are any number of pragmatics in education including curriculum, scheduling, staffing, and financial resources that have an impact on the teaching environment. These are the 'realities' of teaching, but giving beginning teachers awareness for how and why these realities affect their experiences or provide more transparency enables them to better cope with the challenges that accompany these pragmatics. This can be accomplished through pairing the beginning teachers with experienced mentors who are better informed as to the nature of the teaching context, and who perhaps have mechanisms in place to cope with the pragmatics. Alternatively, some awareness of these issues and how to deal with them could be discussed in the students' curriculum and instruction classes or in the cohorts described above. Preservice teachers could be asked to discuss how they anticipate the realities of teaching could influence their student teacher relationships. By being asked to explicitly consider the interpersonal implications of teaching realities, they may be better prepared to embed these realities within their teaching with minimal deleterious impact on their student teacher relationships.

6) Teaching contexts are idiosyncratic and influenced by a series of factors that are difficult to anticipate and react to; what Davis and Sumara (1997) have described as "complex". Beginning teachers are not only asked to learn and thrive within these polymorphic contexts, but are also expected to retain some capacity to improve the education system they are entering. Student teacher relationships improve the likelihood that beginning teachers will be able to meet these expectations. First, a lifetime of relationship experiences gives beginning teachers a starting point with which to approach the seemingly random day-to-day occurrences that influence their teaching. This "ability perspective" empowers student teachers to build on a capacity they possess before entering the classroom as a teacher. Unlike the "deficit perspective" which assumes that beginning

> teachers are pedagogically empty and must be given "tools", such as relationship building skills, in order to be effective teachers. Second, constructive student teacher relationships give beginning teachers more options with which to cope with the unanticipated events in their day. Not only does this allow teachers a greater capacity to understand the impact of the moment on the teacher, student or learning environment, but also there is more probability that the students and teacher will work together to 'roll with the moment' instead of using that instance to disrupt the learning environment. Such a change would begin with the preservice program developers and administrators who embrace this philosophy and can articulate the "ability perspective" with others who are involved in the programs including administrators and instructors.

During an informal presentation to graduate students on the nature of science teaching and knowledge in 2006, Glen Aikenhead (a respected science education specialist) addressed 'Agency of change'. Prior to this seminar I favored the perspective that in order to speak with authority on a topic, a person must have experience with the topic. For example, if you want to speak about the classroom and be respected for your perspective, you must have been a classroom teacher; walked a mile in teachers' shoes, so to speak. How can I as a researcher and teacher make recommendations for preservice teacher education (for example) based on beginning teacher relationship experiences that is the focus of this research? Aikenhead reflected that change to any "way it is done" is a complex and thus resisted process. He postulated that having experience with the suggested change is just the first requirement of change. If this requirement is met, other requirements are put in place to further resist changing the established way it is done. Aspects such as money, time, theoretical underpinnings, motivations, and so forth are all raised, and likely should be, before any change is considered. Thus, change is difficult for any single individual to instigate since it would require an extensive and varied background if it is expected that that individual be experienced with all aspects that influence the change being considered. Aikenhead (2006) believed that true change must be a collective effort, by different stakeholders, with varied expertise and perspectives, and the result is a collective vision full of compromise that ultimately leads to *some* change. This research offers one piece of this mosaic that could lead to change. It offers the relationship experiences of beginning teachers and some factors that influence these relationships. I would not choose to rework preservice education programs or school division hiring and induction policies solely on the basis of this research, but it does offer

one extra perspective that is of value to the committees of individuals that contribute to these decisions. Perhaps the greatest value of research such as this, is that it promotes the value of interpersonal factors, like relationships, to remain a part of the decision making process in an era characterized by decisions driven by labor and economic demands.

Future research

To borrow an expression coined by Geelan (2003) "this is not hypothesis testing research, this is hypothesis generating research". I haven't proven anything, but rather discussed the experiences of the participants and how that has indicated that student teacher relationships are a key component in their becoming teachers; with their relationship orientation changing as they gained experience. I have learned about the experiences of beginning teachers but have been consistently frustrated by two limitations of this research that I would like to see addressed in future research. First, I find that I want to continue to follow the stories of the participants beyond the research period. Did Ben find another job? Did his experiences change as a result? Did he stay in teaching? How about Emily – did she remain a junior high teacher, or did she attempt to return to teaching senior high school which she seemed to enjoy more? There are so many more questions that I could ask of each participant as they continue on in life. I have taken a brief snapshot of these participants in a period of their lives defined by growth and change. I would like to follow up this research with an extensive epilogue detailing the next years as well.

Second, I think that this research would have benefited from being able to draw the participants from across different preservice education programs. It was strength of this study to have participants that already had a relationship with me as a teacher and with themselves as colleagues even before the research began. It shortened the time required to build a relationship between us. It also allowed the participants to better understand the preservice education origin of each other. They collectively related to where each of them had begun. However, some ability to contrast the impact of a different preservice program on the relationship experiences of the participants would have been an interesting level of analysis. For instance, the research literature is dominated by studies detailing the impact of different preservice education programs on

beginning teachers; a level of impact not conveyed by the participants in this study. Perhaps by drawing participants from across different institutions I would have acquired insights on the impact of different preservice education programs on the beginning teachers' student teacher relationship experiences. This study was limited to a discussion of the impact of a single preservice education program with a measure of contrast provided by findings presented in the research literature.

Final word

In the movie "Crash", Matt Dillon's character is originally portrayed as a 'bad cop' who has had a 'bad' day, and takes out his frustration on an African-American 'victim'. We then see him go home to his father who has terrible health and is in constant pain, and we see Dillon's character taking care of his father selflessly. Later we see Dillon confront a former, idealistic partner who abandoned him because he was a 'bad' cop, and state that after he has been in the job for a while it would eventually change him too. He eventually goes on to risk his own life for the woman he originally abused at the beginning of the movie. Is he a hero or villain? This movie is a wonderful expose on the story that is everyone's life. Despite appearances and first impressions, there are no simplistic categorizations of 'good' and 'bad' – context and personal history always have a role to play in the interpretation. People live storied lives and are impacted by them. Everyone is a villain, victim and hero, from the different perspectives of different people or the evolving perspective of a single person. This research illustrated how judgments of teachers based on a-contextual measures such as exam scores or noise level coming from a classroom are not the whole story. Everyone is living and telling stories continually; an attempt to tell these stories not only has the capacity to turn a light on our own understanding and reasons, and also to be only a fleeting excerpt from an ever changing existence that are the lives we all live. "Crash" provides a metaphor for how this research, which has sought to portray the experiences of the participants in context, has value in the pedagogical arena. Student teacher relationship experiences of 13 beginning teachers have value for the reader of this research and the contexts in which they work and live.

By connecting to their stories, we are in a better position to understand for ourselves the value of the journey they are on, and perhaps offer something to other beginning teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) Adapted from T. Wubbels and J. Levy, "Do You Know What You Look Like? Interpersonal Relationships in Education"

> …the teachers' concerns correspond to the issues that were raised during initial training, such as discipline, classroom management and time management, whereas in the interviews they were much more able to express their concerns about a broader range of issues, as was indicated by one teacher: "That research questionnaire, I was doing that for someone else. Whereas sitting talking to you here it's a much more open-ended conversation and my views are coming across far more ... it's just something about being asked to fill in a questionnaire, I don't know ... as if we were being guided." (Oberski, Ford, Higgins & Fisher, 1999, p. 142)

What is the value of a data collection method such as a questionnaire in a study driven by the student teacher relationship experiences of beginning teachers? This study was longitudinal in design, and was certainly not the first work to be undertaken on the importance of the relationship between teachers and their students. I believed that it was important that I attempted to relate the data gathered from the small participant pool of this study with other student teacher relationship research that was previously conducted. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) discuss how narrative work defies generalization, but I chose a variety of data collection methods partly to create the potential to contrast the results from each method; that is, similar findings emerging from different data collection methods would improve the verisimilitude and apparency of any conclusions made that are based on the data. By employing a questionnaire that was used and validated in other research, I situated my study within a greater body of work on student teacher relationships, and also provided a consistent vehicle by which to contrast the interactions of the participants, a) at different stages in the research; and b) with each other.

In 1993, Wubbels, Levy and Hooymayers created a research device to measure the interpersonal aspects of teacher behavior, called the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI). This model was derived from the work of clinical psychologist, Leary (1957), who after hundreds of patient-therapist dialogues and group discussions created a mechanism for graphically representing human interaction. Wubbels et al. chose to base their work on Leary since his graphical representation method was focused on human

behavior and not on instructional-methodological aspects, as was the norm in education literature (Wubbels, Levy and Hooymayers, 1993). The original version of the QTI was in Dutch and it had 77 questions. An American version of the QTI was developed that had 64 questions. The Australian version of the QTI contains 48 questions that are answered using a five-point response scale (Wubbels, 1993). For this study I chose the questionnaire based on the American version (the most recent English version) that has 64 questions and an answer format that uses a five-point Likert-type scale, which is scored from 0 (never) to 4 (always).

Teacher behavior is mapped on a Proximity dimension [Cooperation or Opposition] and on an Influence dimension [Dominance or Submission] to form four quadrants. These are then divided into a total of eight sectors, each describing different behavior characteristics that a teacher may exhibit (See Figures 2 and 3).

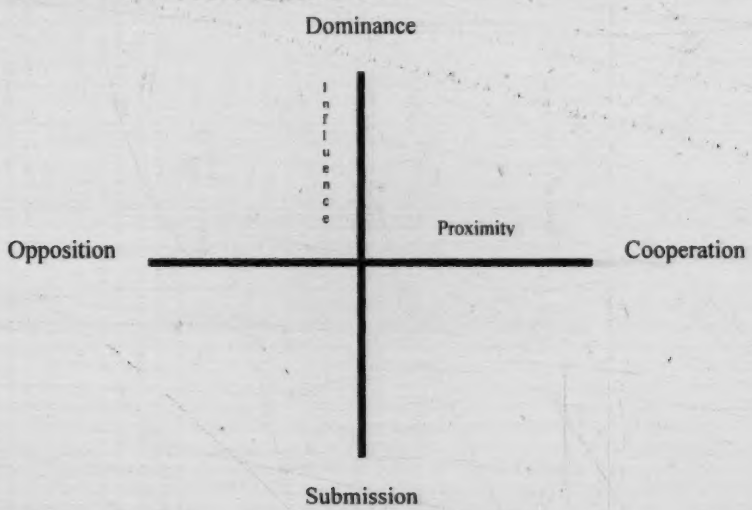


Figure 2: Dimensions of teacher behavior (adapted from Wubbels, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993)

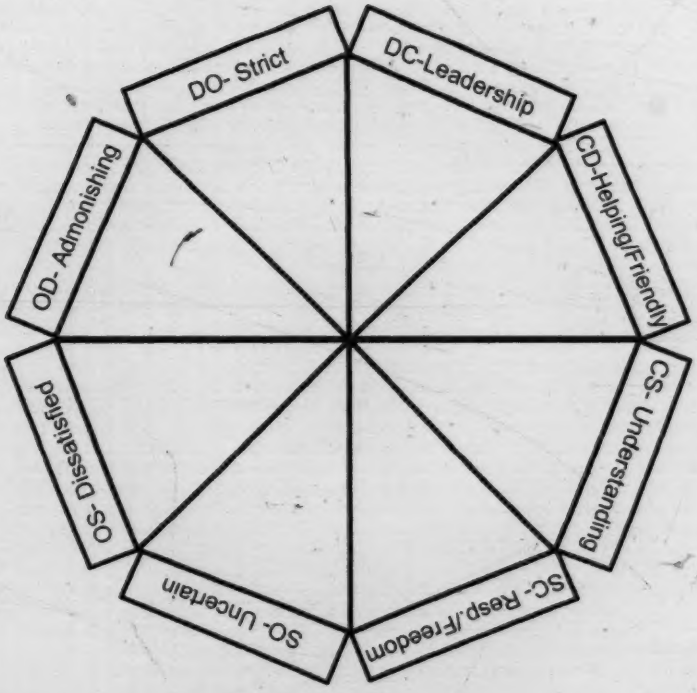


Figure 3: Model for interpersonal teacher behavior (adapted from Wubbels, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993)

The result is a visual representation of the teachers' interpersonal behavior. Figure 4 for example, is an example adapted from Wubbels et al. (1993) that illustrates a QTI graph for a teacher that is lecturing (as completed by the teacher). It demonstrates how the teacher believes he is both 'dominant' and 'cooperative' in his interactions, with a minimal amount of 'dissatisfied' and 'uncertain' behavior while he is lecturing. Figure 5 is an example of this same teachers' QTI when he has the class engaged in group work. Note how his profile switches to being dominated by student 'responsibility/freedom' and 'understanding', demonstrating a shift in the origin for the interactions in class to the students (as might be expected). A copy of the questionnaire that was administered to the participants has been included in Appendix B. To see how the responses from the questionnaire were mapped to the eight graphical quadrants please see Appendix C.

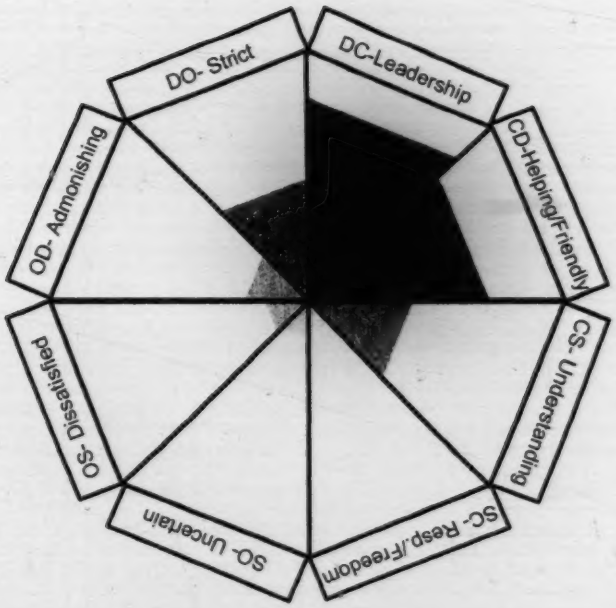


Figure 4: Teacher's behavior for a lesson in which the teacher is lecturing (Adapted from Wubbels, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993)

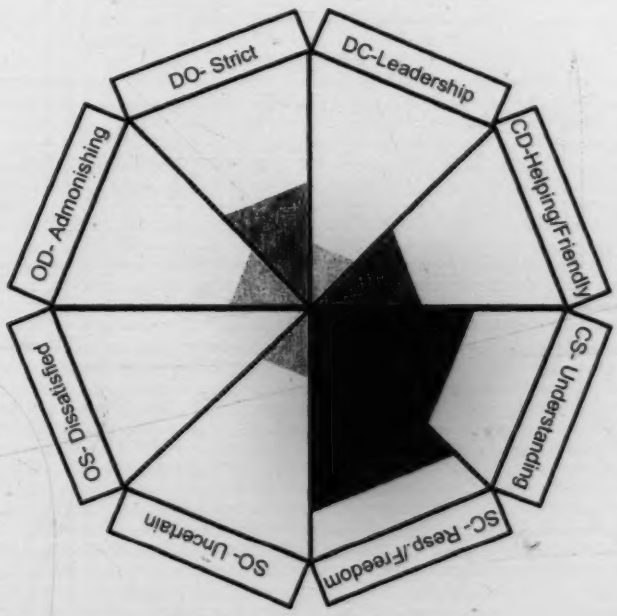


Figure 5: Teacher's behavior for a lesson in which students are engaged in group work (Adapted from Wubbels, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993)

I selected this particular questionnaire for two reasons. First, the QTI has been widely used as an instrument to measure student teacher interaction, and it has proven to be a reliable instrument for measuring student teacher interaction. See Lourdusamy and Khine (2001), for a thorough summary of these studies and their reliability figures. Second, the results are presented graphically, not statistically, thus presenting data patterns visually making it easier to contrast the data obtained. This technique was used in a study by Wilson and Cameron (1996), when they chose to display their data with graphs and figures instead of charts, percentages and statistical calculations. I found it much easier to interpret the patterns of their data and as a result was better able to follow the logic of their conclusions. By rendering the QTI data visually, similar to what Wilson and Cameron (1996) did, it was my goal to increase the accessibility of the data collected with the use of the questionnaire in this research.

Other questionnaires have been developed to measure student teacher interaction, such as the STRS - Student Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta 1991), which is described by Kesner (2000) as

> a 28-item self-report measure designed to assess a teacher's perceptions about his or her relationship with a particular student, the student's interactive behavior, and how the teacher thinks the student feels about him or her. Principal components analysis yielded three significant subscales: (a) Conflict, (b) Closeness, and (c) Dependency. (p. 140)

The visual representation of data, the more common use in other studies and the small amount of time needed to complete the questionnaires, made Wubbels and Levy's (1993) QTI a better tool for my study.

The QTI has been used extensively in other studies, with large samples and was reported to be a useful tool for analyzing student teacher interaction. Lourdusamy and Khine (2001) used the QTI with Singapore trainee teachers who were practice teaching in a manner similar to my own study, and found the QTI to be statistically reliable. Rickards and Fisher (1998) used the QTI with a very large sample of 3589 students and 164 teachers in Australia, and established that the QTI was a valuable way to measure the interpersonal relationships between students and teachers. However, each of these studies used the QTI to the exclusion of any other data collection method and was the sole source of the researchers' conclusions. My research was centered by the student teacher

relationship experiences of the participants. These experiences have richness, context and depth that cannot be captured by a survey. Thus, the role of the QTI in this research was not as central as it was in the studies mentioned above. It was another 'window' through which to consider the interactions between students and teachers and was valuable as a frame of reference, but not as a central theme in this research. As Nijveldt et al. (2005) suggested, the QTI is most valuable when embedded within the context of the teaching environment in which the participants are working.

The QTI survey and its subsequent graphical representation were intended to contrast communication and interaction along two axes. An "Influence" dimension, ranging from "Dominant" to "Submissive", which is described by Wubbels, Creton, Levy and Hooymayers (1993) as "an indication of who [the teacher or student] is directing and controlling the interactions"; and a "Proximity" dimension, ranging from "Opposition" to "Cooperation", described as a "measure of the degree of cooperation or closeness between teacher and student". A teacher who is lecturing in a structured and deliberate fashion while the students quietly take notes is an example of a highly "dominant" interaction on the "Influence" dimension, whereas a student debate with no teacher input is an example of a highly "submissive" interaction (both from the teachers' perspective). The teacher seated with the student at their desk helping them with a problem is an example of an interaction on the "Proximity" dimension that would be categorized as "Cooperative"; the teacher admonishing the students for inappropriate behavior is an example of the "Oppositional" category. The resulting two-dimensional graph is further broken into quadrants based on whether the interaction described by the two axes favors one aspect more than the other. Please see Figure 6 below for a description of teacher interpersonal behaviors that Wubbels and Levy (1993) used to describe a teacher categorized by the QTI survey.

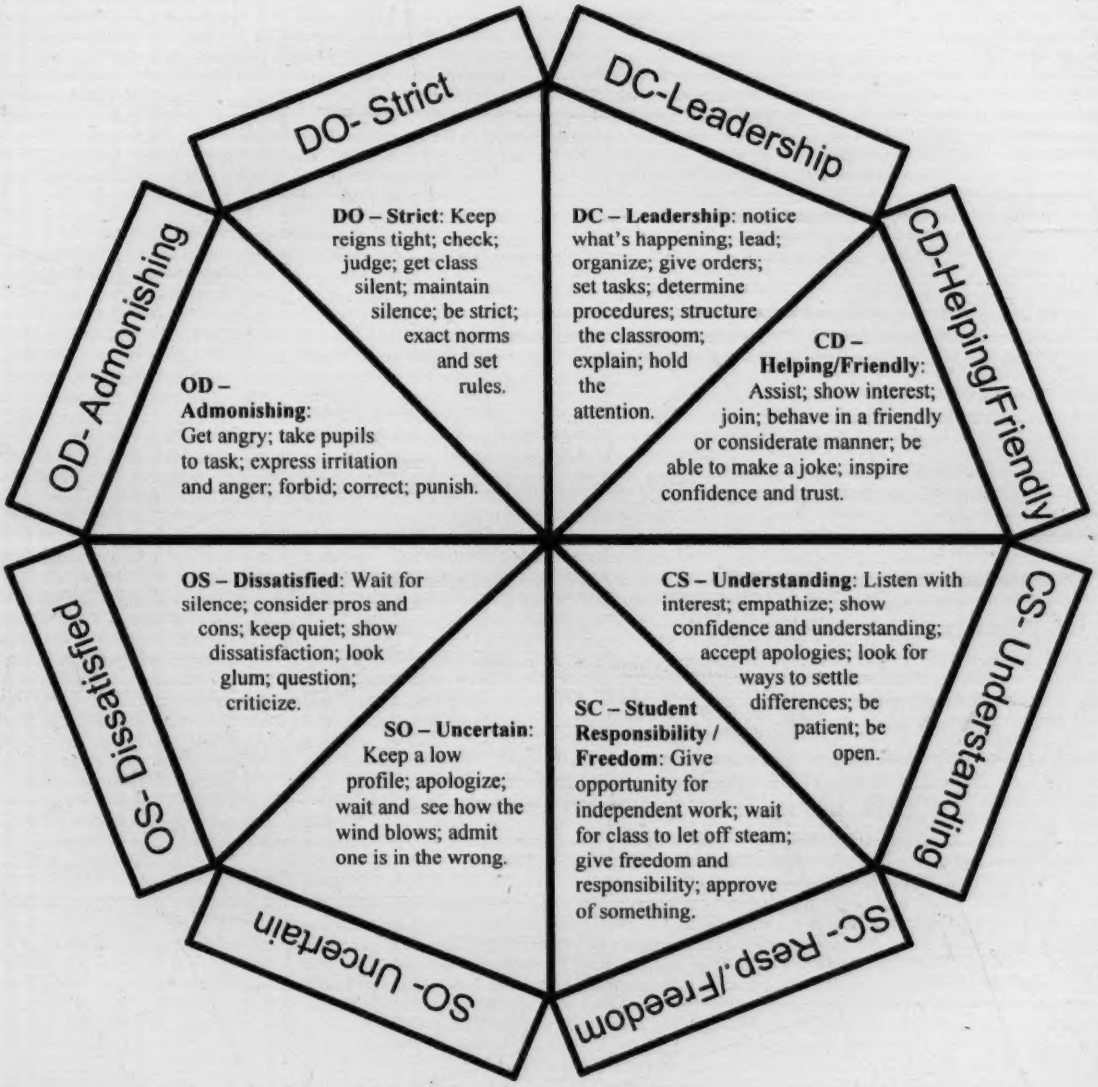

DO- Strict
DC-Leadership
CD-Helping/Friendly
CS- Understanding
SC- Resp./Freedom
SO- Uncertain
OS- Dissatisfied
OD- Admonishing
DO – Strict: Keep reigns tight; check; judge; get class silent; maintain silence; be strict; exact norms and set rules.
DC – Leadership: notice what's happening; lead; organize; give orders; set tasks; determine procedures; structure the classroom; explain; hold the attention.
CD – Helping/Friendly: Assist; show interest; join; behave in a friendly or considerate manner; be able to make a joke; inspire confidence and trust.
CS – Understanding: Listen with interest; empathize; show confidence and understanding; accept apologies; look for ways to settle differences; be patient; be open.
SC – Student Responsibility / Freedom: Give opportunity for independent work; wait for class to let off steam; give freedom and responsibility; approve of something.
SO – Uncertain: Keep a low profile; apologize; wait and see how the wind blows; admit one is in the wrong.
OS – Dissatisfied: Wait for silence; consider pros and cons; keep quiet; show dissatisfaction; look glum; question; criticize.
OD – Admonishing: Get angry; take pupils to task; express irritation and anger; forbid; correct; punish.

Figure 6: Examples of teacher interpersonal behaviors represented by the QTI (Adapted from Wubbels, Creton, Levy and Hooymayers, 1993)

As can be seen in Figure 6, at any given moment the interactions and thus the relationship between students and teachers can be represented and described quite differently. For example, I can recall different instances in which as a teacher I could have been described by every descriptor in the figure. These "communication behaviors", as Wubbels, Creton, Levy and Hooymayers (1993) describe them, continually change, whereas

"communication styles" emerge only after a great many interactions have occurred among the parties described by the communication style. This was actually a difficulty that the participants described when they were completing the questionnaires; the survey questions could be answered differently depending on the situation they were recalling. They were advised to answer the questions as though speaking of their student teacher relationship in general, not in reference to specific moments; that is, to speak to their interpersonal style not their interpersonal behaviors. Nonetheless, it may have resulted in some differences in their responses from semester to semester or even might explain some of the differences among the participants. Recalling different instances would result in a different characterization of their style.

In Figure 7 are the four graphs resulting from the QTI's completed by Emily across the length of the research. Please reference Figure 8 for a label and brief description of what each quadrant represents.

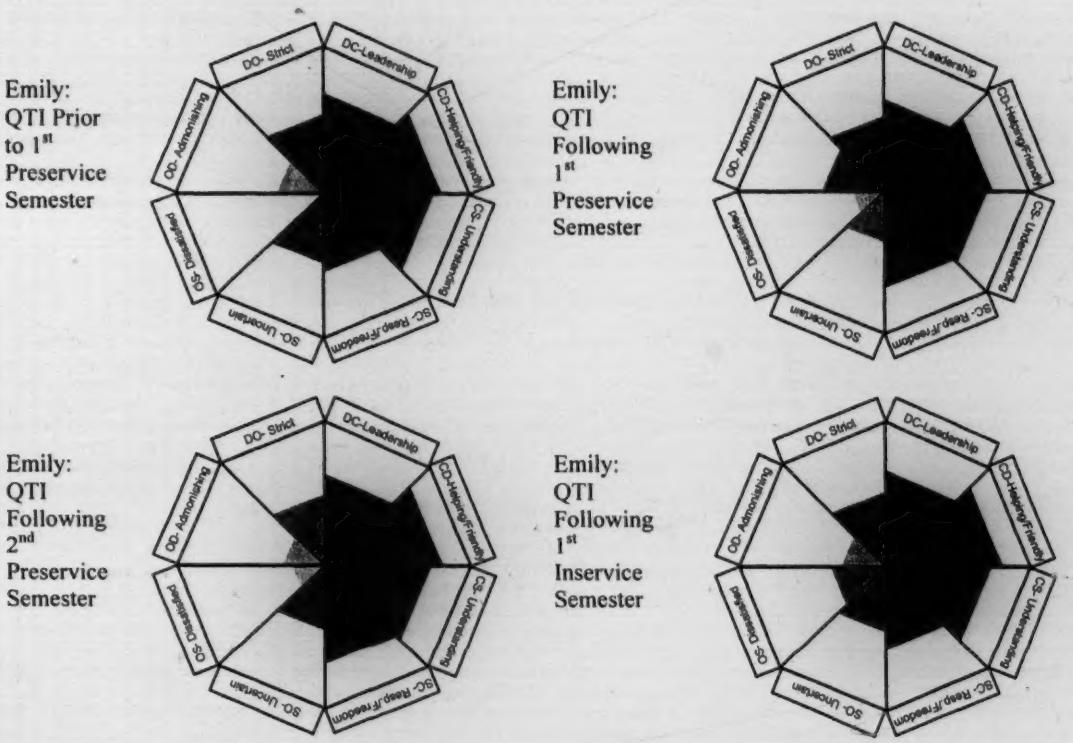
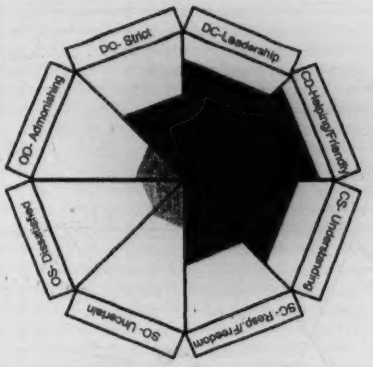


Figure 7: Emily's QTI results

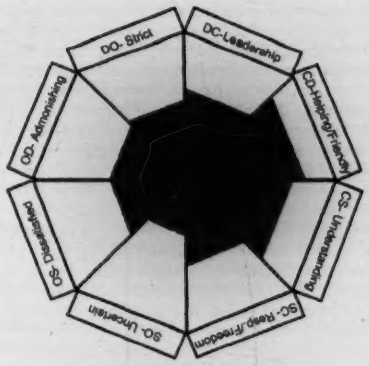
As you can see when you compare Emily's results, Emily is overtly more "cooperative" than "oppositional", remaining remarkably consistent across the successive semesters. This propensity for 'cooperative' dominance was the same for every participant, and was the most dominant and consistent pattern that emerged from the QTI surveys. Upon closer inspection, however, you can see that some of the quadrants did change from semester to semester. For instance, Emily apparently valued 'student responsibility/freedom' (SC quadrant) more at the end of her first semester than she did before beginning her practica, an inclination that stayed consistent during the remainder of the research period. She also became more 'admonishing' (OD quadrant) by the end of her first practicum, which then reverted to close to her original emphasis in successive semesters. One result that does stand out, however, is that with her progression through her practica, Emily showed a steady increase in the 'dissatisfied' (OS) quadrant. This increase was a pattern that emerged for the majority of the participants. As the participants gained experience teaching, they tended to show an increase in the 'oppositional' quadrant that seemed to demonstrate recognition that at times as a teacher they had to exert influence over their students that was contrary to the students' wishes. Interestingly, Emily taught both high school and junior high in different semesters, but for her this did not result in a consistent change in her QTI pattern. In other words, what Emily thought of herself as a teacher seemed independent of the level that she was teaching from semester to semester.

In Figure 8, I have presented the QTI results from four different participants all at the same stage in their preservice education programs. I did this to provide further examples of data that were derived via the QTI, but also to contrast how different beginning teachers represented their teaching while all at the same stage in their progression as teachers. I have also included brief details of what each participant was teaching during the practicum that this QTI followed.

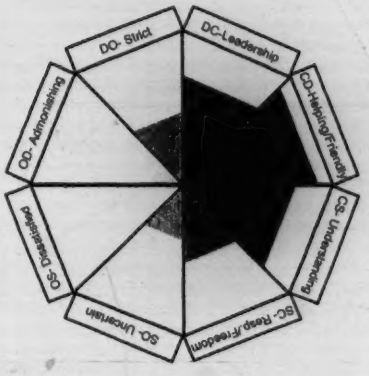
Steven: Teaching science in a small junior high school.



Doug: Teaching drama in a large urban high school.



Marie: Teaching science at a large urban high school.



Ben: Teaching math at a small junior high school.

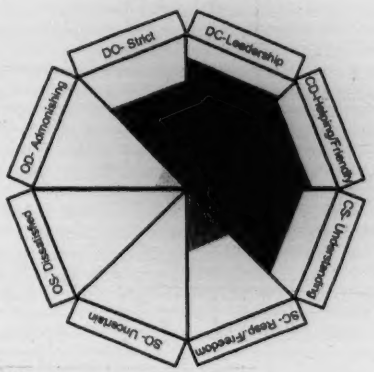


Figure 8: QTI's from four different participants after completing their second preservice practicum

As can be seen in these four graphs, the participants all remain predominantly 'cooperative' with the 'helping/friendly' (CD quadrant) typically the most pronounced. However, there seems to be little specific relationship among the subject, the community size, and the level that each participant was teaching prior to completing the survey for that semester. The experiences each participant had each semester did seem to create change in how they responded to the survey, but those changes were not consistent across the participants. Nonetheless, the overall dominance of the 'cooperative' and 'dominant' aspects is a result that has been observed by other researchers after using the QTI. Levy, Creton and Wubbels (1993) asked students to complete a QTI for what they considered to be the "ideal teacher behaviors" of their "best" and "worst "teachers. Figure 9 illustrates the QTI's that resulted.

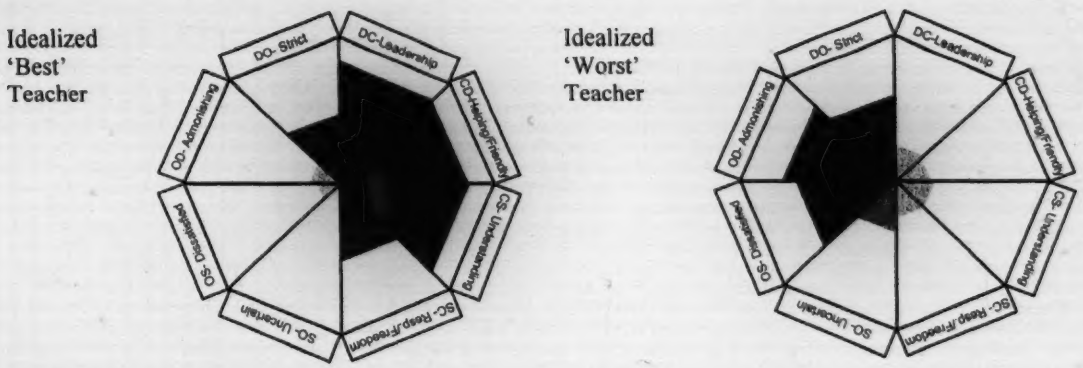


Figure 9: QTI's of idealized "best" and "worst" teachers (adapted from Levy, Creton and Wubbels, 1993)

There is remarkable similarity between Levy, Creton and Wubbels (1993) "best" teacher and the typical QTI pattern of the participants in this research. This, however, is not surprising as both the beginning and experienced teachers in Levy, Creton, and Wubbels research also obtained similar patterns when asked to complete a QTI to represent their teaching. Seemingly, teachers regardless of their merits and differences as teachers tend to perceive their teaching as favoring the dominant and cooperative interpersonal aspects when asked to complete a QTI representing their teaching in general. Teacher "typologies" were developed from the use of QTI's with teachers and students by Brekelmans, Levy and Rodriguez (1993). In these typologies they sought to represent the teacher type that was represented by particular QTI patterns. When the QTI patterns from the participants in this research in general were contrasted with the typologies they developed, it resulted in two findings. First, that the participants in general began this research in what Brekelmans, Levy and Rodríguez (1993) would label as "tolerant and authoritative". Second, with experience there was an increase in more oppositional tendencies; in the words of the typologies, they became more "repressive" or "aggressive". Let me emphasize, that even though there was a slight shift represented in the data, an observer without the referent of their previous QTI's, would likely continue to describe the patterns of the participants as overtly favoring the cooperative and dominant interpersonal aspects. For a full description of what each typology represents please refer to Brekelmans, Levy and Rodriguez (1993).

The participants in this research are all different teachers, and although they share a common goal of wanting their students to do well in their classes, do not interact with their students in the same way. Nonetheless, upon review of the QTI results it can be seen that they share a remarkable similarity in how they responded to the questions that make up the QTI survey and thus how their interpersonal interactions are characterized. This is good news for the participants as the patterns that resulted from their responses mirror the patterns of what has been established in other research as "good" teaching. Nonetheless, this also suggests that the QTI is not a good tool for discriminating between the specific interpersonal qualities of teachers. To derive an overall statement or picture of the participants' interpersonal inclinations, the QTI is acceptable, but for a specific discussion of the student teacher relationship experiences and their influence on the participants, it is necessary to consider the more detailed journals, classroom observations and group meetings used in this study.

In Appendix B, I have included a copy of the QTI survey that was administered to the participants, and in Appendix C, I have included a table that describes each quadrant of the QTI graph as well as the conversion chart for how each question in the survey was matched to each quadrant of the QTI graph.

Appendix B: Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI).

Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction
(Teacher Version)

This questionnaire asks you to describe your teaching behavior. With this tool I will be able to measure your perceptions of your own instruction. This is NOT a test. It is simply a benchmark so that you can compare how you believe your teaching changes over time.

On the next few pages you will find 64 sentences. For each sentence on the questionnaire circle the letter that most applies to your teaching of a class. For example:

	Never				Always
I express myself clearly	A	B	C	D	E

If you think that you always express yourself clearly while teaching, circle letter E on the questionnaire. If you think you never express yourself clearly while teaching circle letter A. You can also choose letters, B, C or D, which are in between. If you want to change your answer after you have circled a letter please erase your previous answer completely. Thank you for your cooperation.

Adapted from T. Wubbels and J. Levy (1993); "Do You Know What You Look Like? Interpersonal Relationships in Education"

PLEASE BEGIN
POSSIBLE RESPONSES
Never Always
A B C D E

		Never				Always
1.	I am strict.	A	B	C	D	E
2.	My students must be silent in my class.	A	B	C	D	E
3.	I talk enthusiastically about my subject.	A	B	C	D	E
4.	I trust my students.	A	B	C	D	E
5.	I am concerned when my students do not understand me.	A	B	C	D	E
6.	If my students disagree with me we can talk about it.	A	B	C	D	E
7.	I threaten to punish my students.	A	B	C	D	E
8.	Students can decide some things in class.	A	B	C	D	E
9.	I am demanding.	A	B	C	D	E
10.	I believe my students cheat.	A	B	C	D	E
11.	I am willing to explain things again.	A	B	C	D	E
12.	My students do not know anything.	A	B	C	D	E
13.	If my students want something I am willing to cooperate.	A	B	C	D	E
14.	My tests are hard.	A	B	C	D	E
15.	I help my students with their work.	A	B	C	D	E
16.	I get angry unexpectedly.	A	B	C	D	E
17.	If my students have something to say, I listen.	A	B	C	D	E
18.	I sympathize with my students.	A	B	C	D	E
19.	I try to make my students look foolish.	A	B	C	D	E
20.	My standards are very high.	A	B	C	D	E
21.	My students influence me.	A	B	C	D	E
22.	My students need my permission before they can speak.	A	B	C	D	E
23.	I seem uncertain to my students.	A	B	C	D	E
24.	I look down upon my students.	A	B	C	D	E
25.	My students can choose assignments which are most interesting to them.	A	B	C	D	E
26.	I am unhappy.	A	B	C	D	E
27.	My students are allowed to fool around in class.	A	B	C	D	E
28.	I put my students down.	A	B	C	D	E
29.	I take a personal interest in my students.	A	B	C	D	E
30.	My students cannot do things well.	A	B	C	D	E
31.	I explain things clearly.	A	B	C	D	E
32.	I realize when my students do not understand.	A	B	C	D	E

		Never				Always
33.	I let my students get away with a lot in class.	A	B	C	D	E
34.	I am hesitant in class.	A	B	C	D	E
35.	I am friendly in class.	A	B	C	D	E
36.	My students learn a lot from me.	A	B	C	D	E
37.	I am someone my students can depend on.	A	B	C	D	E
38.	I get angry quickly.	A	B	C	D	E
39.	I act as though I do not know what to do.	A	B	C	D	E
40.	I hold my students attention.	A	B	C	D	E
41.	I am quick to correct my students when they break a rule.	A	B	C	D	E
42.	I let my students boss me around.	A	B	C	D	E
43.	I am impatient.	A	B	C	D	E
44.	I am not sure what to do when my students fool around.	A	B	C	D	E
45.	I know everything that goes on in the classroom.	A	B	C	D	E
46.	It is easy to make a fool out of me.	A	B	C	D	E
47.	I have a sense of humor.	A	B	C	D	E
48.	I allow my students a lot of choice in what to study.	A	B	C	D	E
49.	I give my students a lot of free time in class.	A	B	C	D	E
50.	I can take a joke.	A	B	C	D	E
51.	I have a bad temper.	A	B	C	D	E
52.	I am a good leader.	A	B	C	D	E
53.	If my students do not finish their homework they are scared to go to my class.	A	B	C	D	E
54.	I seem dissatisfied.	A	B	C	D	E
55.	I am timid.	A	B	C	D	E
56.	I am patient.	A	B	C	D	E
57.	I am severe when marking papers.	A	B	C	D	E
58.	I am suspicious.	A	B	C	D	E
59.	It is easy to pick a fight with me.	A	B	C	D	E
60.	My class is pleasant.	A	B	C	D	E
61.	My students are afraid of me.	A	B	C	D	E
62.	I act confidently.	A	B	C	D	E
63.	I am sarcastic.	A	B	C	D	E
64.	I am lenient.	A	B	C	D	E

THANK YOU!

Appendix C : QTI Quadrant Descriptions and Conversion Chart

QTI Quadrant	Descriptions	Contributing questions from QTI survey
Leadership [DC] leads, organises, gives instructions, sets tasks, holds attention, structures sessions	Extent to which teacher provides leadership to class and holds student attention.	3, 31, 36, 40, 45, 52, 62
Helping/Friendly [CD] assists, shows, considerate manner, inspires trust, will share jokes	Extent to which teacher is friendly and helpful towards students.	5, 15, 29, 35, 37, 47, 50, 50, 60
Understanding [CS] Listens with interest, accepts apologies, is patient, is open to students	Extent to which teacher shows understanding/concern/care to students.	4, 6, 11, 13, 17, 18, 32, 56
Student Responsibility/Freedom [SC] gives freedom to students, negotiates	Extent to which students are given opportunities to assume responsibilities for their own activities.	8, 21, 25, 27, 33, 48, 49, 64
Uncertain [SO] low profile, apologises for errors, waits and sees what to do, unsure	Extent to which teacher exhibits her/his uncertainty.	23, 34, 39, 42, 44, 46, 55
Dissatisfied [OS] looks glum, shows dissatisfaction, criticises, questions	Extent to which teacher shows unhappiness/dissatisfaction with student.	7, 10, 12, 19, 26, 28, 30, 54, 58
Admonishing [OD] gets angry, expresses irritation, forbids, punishes, punitive	Extent to which teacher shows anger/temper/impatient in class.	16, 24, 38, 41, 43, 51, 59, 63
Strict [DO] keeps tight control, strict, maintains silence, exact norms, inflexible	Extent to which teacher is strict with and demanding of students.	1, 2, 9, 14, 20, 22, 53, 57, 61

Appendix D: Partial Discussion Categories

Researcher Note: I present a summary of the findings from the next seven categories in a table format; this is a compromise. These latter categories were not as evident in the data and I considered not including them in the findings. However, I recognize that any data derived from a small sample size likely represents the experiences and perspectives of a significant number of beginning teachers. Thus, I have included them, but in a summarized form. I believe that by giving a summary and then examples drawn from the data that I can effectively convey the importance of these latter categories, without the full explanations I used to discuss the first 12 categories. See Table 4 below for the summary of categories 5.13 through 5.19.

Table 4

Summary of data categories 5.13 through 5.19

Category Title	Brief Summary of Findings	Examples Drawn from Data and/or Literature
5.13) Exhaustion	The expression "more energy than sense" fortuitously applied to many beginning teachers. They have not learned many of the "tricks of the trade" that made the time of their more experienced colleagues more efficient, but with sheer hard work and perseverance did a remarkable job in the classroom. This had a price, however, and every participant at some point expressed how exhaustion was influencing them as teachers and consequently, their relationships with the students. This was partly because it took them more time to do the same things as their experienced colleagues, but also because they, for the most part, did not know what a reasonable limit was. That is, they had not learned to say "no"; that they were finite, and that the first solution to a problem should not be to "just spend more time at it", as Marie says she was apt to do in the beginning. To add insult to injury, the participants often reflected that they were doing all of this work and paying to do it as well – since they were still students. The participants described a number of different outcomes that resulted from their exhaustion: they were forced to become more efficient, their personal lives suffered greatly as a result of the time they were investing, they barely survived until the end of the student teaching practicum, and their teaching and relationships suffered greatly – they had lost the ability to cope with problems and students in a manner that previously was not a big deal.	"I had no more energy to plan. And when I took kids into the lab, I had no energy to discipline. The structure of this school isn't very conducive to labs either. It's a management nightmare because kids are sitting one atop of another. The kids began to struggle and resist working. I began to resent them for doing so. Again, I took things personally. And we'd clash and argue and fight. On one occasion, a few days before Christmas, I finally broke down and cried to my staff." Emily "I am exhausted, feeling down – I am feeling ineffective at creating lessons that capture students' attention. I am wondering if I have the potential to be a master teacher (I don't know what to use as a benchmark to see if I will stay the course or cut-and-run, if it's the student relationships that are made, then I am thinking I will be unsuccessful in this career)." Ben Shumaker and Brownell (1984) found that interaction with students is a central variable in the burnout process. Abu-Hilal and Salameh (1992) implicated that even teachers experiencing burnout, expressed caring attitudes toward their students and hesitated to attribute the state of burnout to students. (Hewitt, 1993, p.7)
5.14) Peer/Socialization pressure	When I was a high school teacher, a statement I have said to my classes was "since I have never taught you before, I have no idea what you have been like – this is your opportunity to become what you want to be, without your past coloring my perception." Essentially I was implying that	"Instead of simply sitting back and seeing how things played out, I approached several different teachers and asked for **how** I should approach those junior high kids on the first day. The two best pieces of advice I received were: "Don't smile

	each of them (and me) was being given a fresh start. Humans are social organisms and we are influenced by the actions and opinions of the informed stakeholders around us. The participants were no exception, and they described being influenced by their teacher colleagues, the administration, the research cohort, and even their students at different times. This was sometimes a direct influence such as when their mentor would tell them to expect one of their students to be a "trouble maker". Other times it was in the form of almost a "mythology", in which the participants expected groups or individuals to be a certain way because it is "common knowledge" that a particular group or demographic is a certain way. "Junior high boys are walking hormone factories" would be an example of one of these influential mythologies that colors the actions of a beginning teacher placed in a junior high student teaching environment. Since beginning teachers are being formally evaluated by mentors and the schools they are placed in, and they wanted to make a 'good' impression, there was a strong motivation to become what they perceived they were being told to be. In the context of student teacher relationships – they often were giving an operative basis in which to interact with the students that originated with the experiences of people other than themselves. Additionally, because they lack experience or alternative frames of reference by which to judge their interaction and situation, the participants tended to follow the conventional wisdom of their peers or mentor. This influence was so strong that more often than not, when the participants discussed a positive moment that defied convention or their observations of others, they concluded with a qualifier like "so far" – waiting for the bubble to burst, and for the situation or interaction to revert to the expected norm.	until Christmas"; and, "Make sure that when you are talking, you do **not** have your back to them and you are not restricted to being stuck up at the whiteboard." Abe "I expected things to be vastly different, like there would be some distinct divide between 'junior high kids' and senior high kids'. The way you hear teachers and people around the university talk, it's like the two are completely different creatures. However, that is not what I have seen so far." Phil "In the coming 3 weeks I am going to focus on lightening up my interactions with them. I think I am too worried about what other teachers might expect or tolerate rather than what I want." Jim "They [beginning teachers] became 'socialized' into the ethos of teaching, and consequently, they started acting as their colleagues and school administration did, instead of trying to keep with their own ideas and acting accordingly, which is consistent with earlier work (Powell, 1997; Burk and Fry, 1997). Beginning teachers complied with the 'ways of doing things' at school, even though they disagreed with them, which touches the notion of 'strategic compliance' suggested by Lacey (1977) and relates to the effects of school culture on teachers' practices of teaching (Powell, 1997; Burk and Fry, 1997; Puk and Haines, 1999)" (Flores, 2003, p.8). "We need teachers… who do not have all the "answers" but are struggling to find their own voices/identities in schools in which conformity to established norms, methods, and subject matter is the rule." (Gordon, 2004, p.62)
5.15) Pragmatics dominates actions and reasons	When a prospective teacher begins the process of becoming a teacher they enter their preservice education programs with all manner of preconceptions of what teaching is like, what they will be like as teachers, and a belief that they can be effective in that role. The participants used words like "should" or "will be" when discussing these preconceptions. As an example, Ben stated before doing his first student teaching practicum that the quality of his student teacher relationships *will be* one of the ways he judges the success of his student teaching. Not surprisingly, the realities or pragmatics of teaching did not often align with these expectations. Ben was one of the first participants to begin talking about how disillusioned he was with teaching, because the	"Who cares about philosophy of teaching or the natures of kids – I need to focus on today, maybe tomorrow and what is in front of me – what I can see; I have no time for anything else." Abe "If all you had to do were form relationships it would be much easier becoming a teacher. Things like pace being driven by curriculum, diploma exams, etc. often make you into a person you do not want to be with your students." Doug "Every night I freak out that we aren't covering material fast enough. I'm kind of

	"realities" were forcing him to become something he had not anticipated and which he used to resent in the teachers he had as a student. One of the resolutions described by the participants was to resort to a "survival" orientation. Essentially, the participants came to accept that their reality was not what they expected and acted to re-orient themselves toward doing what they needed to do to get the job done. Emily talked about how student apathy is denying her a relationship with her students thus she has stopped trying and now "just teaches the material". Marie stopped planning "fun" activities in her second student teaching semester, which were intended more as an attempt to connect to her kids than by some attempt to meet a curricular objective, because they were "putting her behind". Doug felt "trapped" by deadlines and regretted the loss of time to interact with his students. In all of these examples, the participants are becoming what they feel they need to, which for them often meant reducing attempts at forming relationships with their students in favor of increased time and attention directed toward meeting curricular objectives. Often these beginning teachers shifted their relationship attempts to instances outside of class time and into the hallways during lunch and breaks.	bummed we won't have enough time for a "movie day". We barely have enough time for labs. It's different from a practicum" Marie "According to students, some teachers also became less responsive to their learning needs. In other words, it appeared that teachers tended to adopt a survival perspective. They struggled to interact effectively with the students and, therefore, they preferred to lecture them rather than trying a more inductive/constructivist approach" (Flores, 2003, p. 15). "With courses increasingly behind them, student teaching looming or present, and actual teaching in their own classrooms not far behind, the teachers-to-be increasingly relied on the regularities of teaching and teachers already in the classrooms. "How it's done" towered over research findings and principles espoused by leading figures in the field, past and present. These future teachers squirreled away their store of methodological nutrients to be brought forth in times of later need. To the degree that theory had taken some hold in their minds, prospective teachers appeared to view it less as impractical than as not *immediately* useful. They anticipated that it might well be dusted off and tested after they became more adept at classroom management" (Goodland, 1990, p. 224).
5.16) Maintaining the teacher image	Being the *teacher* and being *themselves* are distinct entities for the participants in this research. Thus they often wondered how aspects they labeled as "personal qualities" influenced their teacher image, and subsequently how their students perceived and treated them as a result. Dress, age, formality of language, and even emotional vulnerability during class were all described as influencing how their students perceived them as teachers and inevitably how their student teacher relationship were influenced by these factors. Taylor, for instance, talks about how his willingness to be himself on the dodge-ball court during intramurals over lunchtime has broken through many barriers with his students and has resulted in many more genuine and personal interactions with his students. He does worry that the students may not be taking him as seriously as they might have, but does not believe he has suffered as a result. Typically though, there was great effort made by the participants to be perceived as a teacher, even if that was in conflict with what they would describe as their natural inclinations. Even though they found that by being themselves their relationships tended to more	"Maybe I would rather teach junior high because I am much older then they are, or maybe it's because I can still joke around with them or maybe it's because I feel more confidant with the material." Christine "Are you a teacher 24/7? When can you let your guard down? How human can you be?" Taylor "I think I am learning that I must be much stricter with these students in order to establish my authority, especially during these early stages of my presence in the classroom. I tried to give them some room to move under my thumb, but as I can now see I gave too much room." Jim

	"genuine", by choosing actions that portrayed them as the teacher, they felt they were given more respect, power and their legitimacy as teachers improved. Again, there seemed to be a desire to establish their *legitimate* power as teachers before they felt they had the freedom to become more *referent* with their students.	
5.17) Professional conduct and the student teacher relationship	The student teacher relationship often lived in the personal interactions and trust between the students and the teacher. Just one of the manifestations was a genuine interest by students in their teacher and vice versa, and this allowed the teacher to better read the students, understand the context the student is living with and even fine tune lessons to better suit the students in class. However, if the relationship became *too* personal, it crossed into an arena that is generally considered to be unprofessional and not an appropriate interaction between teacher and student. The participants were well aware of this and recognized that if the relationship crossed the line of unprofessional interaction, a line that is most often not defined for them, their careers and even lives could be hurt by that interaction. Thus many of the participants expressed some form of mixed emotions regarding their relationships with their students. They sought a level of interaction that raised their teaching to higher levels and was gratifying to both the teacher and the students, but yet at the same time, sought to protect themselves against the relationship "going too far" or being perceived by the students as something that they did not intend. Beginning teachers having limited experience interacting as teachers with students, and thus tended to err on the side of caution and chose actions that could not be construed as unprofessional even if the result was interactions they realized would hurt their student teacher relationships. As Phil summarized, sometimes he chose to ignore comments from his students and to "hide in the content" where he knew it was safe and his words and actions could not be misinterpreted. The fact that many beginning teachers are just a few yeas older than the students they are teaching complicated the interactions between beginning teachers and their students. Emily, Kelly, and Marie all described scenarios in which the boys in their classes made overt sexual advances toward them, which in each case was rebuffed with an overt retreat into the role and power of the teacher. The actions of the boys were pointed out to be inappropriate and some form of disciplinary action was put into place to discourage that form of interaction from their students. I do not believe it is coincidence that as the participants became more experienced and eventually moved into inservice teaching, their actions were more deliberately intended to ensure a minimal number of circumstances developed that might be construed as unprofessional. The participants had a better sense of where and how	"The most frustrating thing I find with high school students is that at times I have to put up a barrier to indicate that I am the teacher and they are a student. Several of my grade 12 students have asked me to go skiing or snowboarding with them, but as a professional you simply cannot do so." Abe "A few students are being very friendly, which is good, but I'm afraid of crossing the line – I don't want to be the teacher that tries to be everyone's friend and 'just one of the guys'. If I am too friendly, I might not get any respect. I'm trying to be interested in their lives, but aloof at the same time." Marie "The students recognize that I am closer to them in age, and therefore I can't talk to them like how the older teachers communicate with them. However, it works to my advantage that I have many things in common with them. Sometimes it is hard for me not to be their 'friend', but I know they do still see me as an authority figure, so I don't mind being like an older sister to some of them." Kelly

	to draw the line, and how much influence not drawing the line could have on their careers.	
5.18) Where does the student teacher relationship happen?	Let me reiterate that beginning teachers possessed very few of the skills that experienced teachers have when they begin their student teaching. All of the participants at one point or another openly stated that they valued a relationship with their students, but did not know how to create it, or what it would be like once it had been created. This is interesting in and of itself, in that they would not see that any interaction with students, curricular or otherwise, would result in a relationship between them. Nonetheless, there was a general consensus that class time was for instruction (which often required classroom management), and thus if they wanted to have a relationship with a student, they would need to be find out-of-class moments in which to foster this. Thus, particularly at the beginning of their teacher journey, the participants actively sought interactive moments with their students outside of instructional time. Some chose to stop and talk with the students in the halls, some greeted their students as they came through the door, some involved themselves in clubs and intramural programs, and most tried to take time during quiet moments when the students were doing seatwork to interact with their students. It was the rare few during their first student teaching practicum that recognized the value of their interactions with the students *during* lessons in fostering a relationship between them and their students. However, by the time that the participants had become inservice teachers, most had become comfortable with this level of interaction. In a few cases, because the participant was so busy during the day as inservice teachers, in class interactions had become the only time they interacted with students.	"I've really been finding that when I intentionally walk down their hallway in the morning and give them grief they really react positively." Steven "I feel as if I am forming some really good relationships with some of the students. I'm trying to do this through talking with them before class and saying "hi" to them in the halls." Marie "I had a great time watching the kids play dodge ball. I was finally able to meet a few of them on their level and be seen as more than the 'student teacher'. I am learning that if I want any kind of relationship with my students I must get involved extracurricularly." Jim "I have not figured out how to develop relationships on the fly during class." Emily
5.19) University preservice education programs and its influence on the student teacher relationship	The participants of this study had little to say about the University's role in the development of their student teacher relationships. Yet there is a relatively large amount of research that has been reported on this topic. For the participants in this research the University's role in their experiences was not as large a factor as would seem to be indicated by the proportion of the literature dedicated to this topic. Nonetheless, the few times that the participants referenced the University they seemed to indicate they did not feel it prepared them adequately for what they experienced. They felt unprepared for some of the "realities" described earlier. Marie and Christine did mention that they valued the role of the university in helping them form support networks of peers going through similar experiences, as well as introduced them to people that they hope to continue to work with as inservice teachers. But the majority that did mention the university, described it more as a "hoop to be jumped	"I felt like a total amateur and resented my University education and my limited practicum experience for not preparing me for these eventualities. I was lucky in the sense that I got to teach academic and gifted students during the practicum and succeed but unlucky in the sense that I was not prepared for the reality of teaching." Emily "At the beginning of the semester, candidates had a high sense of efficacy, spent a great deal of time planning lessons, and designing lessons so that they included more than one activity. By the end of student teaching, these same novices saw pupils as adversaries, were obsessed with class control, spent less time preparing lessons, and limited lessons to single activities not likely to encourage disruption. Mcneely and Mertz (1990)

	through" than an actual benefit. Phil actually described the university as an impediment to his student teacher relationships – because program requirements forced his interactions with the students to be disjointed during the student teaching practica. Instead of just being allowed to be the teacher during his student teaching tenure, he was forced to return to the university and to meet with supervisors from the university when he wanted to be in the classroom with his students.	speculated that the student teachers' apparent disillusionment may have been caused by idealized views of pupils and classrooms communicated during teacher education courses" (Kagan, 1992, p. 143). "Research during the last decade has demonstrated that the formal aspects of preservice preparation do little to alter students' outlooks and practices, whereas the less formal, experiential aspects of students teaching are potentially significant influences. The images of knowledge, power and language in teaching that are implicit in the pedagogy of preservice programs may be among the most potent informal influences on prospective teachers. Thus, embedded in preservice pedagogy itself – not simply what teacher educators say to their students about the kinds of teachers they should become, but what they show them about the power and knowledge of practicing teachers – is a powerful subtext about teaching and about the boundaries of teacher agency in schools and larger educational systems" (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 115).

Appendix E: Participant Biographical Information

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Description of 1st Student Teaching Practicum	Description of 2nd Student Teaching Practicum	Description of 1st Inservice Teaching Semester
Dan	M	20-25	Small, public, urban high school; teaching science.	N/A	N/A
Tim	M	20-25	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	N/A	N/A
Taylor	M	20-25	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	Large, public, rural high school; teaching physical education.	N/A
Christine	F	20-25	Small, public, rural K-9 school; teaching science.	Large, public, rural high school; teaching mathematics and science.	N/A
Jim	M	30-35	Small, public, rural K-9 school; teaching science.	Large, public, rural high school; teaching mathematics and science.	N/A
Steven	M	20-25	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	Small, public, urban junior high school; teaching science.	N/A
Doug	M	20-25	Large, public, rural high school: teaching science.	Large, public, urban high school; teaching drama.	N/A
Phil	M	20-25	Large, catholic, urban high school; teaching science.	Large, public, urban junior high school; teaching English.	Small, public, rural K-12 school; teaching computers and English.
Marie	F	20-25	Large, public, urban junior high school; teaching science.	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	Substitute teaching; Small night class teaching high school biology.
Abe	M	20-25	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	Large, public, rural high school; teaching mathematics.	Large, public, urban junior high school; teaching mathematics.
Emily	F	20-25	Large, public, urban junior high school; teaching science.	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	Small, public, rural K-9 school; teaching science.
Kelly	F	20-25	Large, catholic, urban high school; teaching science.	Large, catholic, urban high school; teaching science.	Small, private, urban K-12 school; teaching science.
Ben	M	30-35	Large, public, urban high school; teaching science.	Small, catholic, urban junior high school; teaching mathematics.	Large, catholic, urban high school; teaching mathematics and science.

Appendix F: Letter of Information and Invitation to Participate in the Research

May 3, 2005

Dear Participant

My name is Mark Hirschkorn and I am a doctoral student here at the University of Alberta doing research to complete my Doctoral Dissertation as partial requirement for my Ph.D. in Education. I would like to invite you to participate in my research which is directed toward understanding the experiences of a beginning teacher as they form relationships with their students. This research will be used as the foundation for my dissertation and may also serve as the basis for articles presented in education journals or at educator conferences.

There is much literature on preservice and beginning teachers, for it is this group that is in the unique position of having to make the transition from student to teacher; from university theory and philosophy to the pragmatics of the classroom. It is the goal of all university education programs to prepare teachers as well as possible for being successful in their careers as teachers. It is my belief that the relationships that teachers form with their students are a key element in their success as well as their motivation and self-esteem when it comes to teaching. Unfortunately, little is done in preservice education programs to help beginning teachers develop the skills they will require to effectively build positive relationships with their students. The few studies that have been done have used surveys and interviews to achieve two ends; First, to try to determine if the relationships between teachers and students have a significant impact on the teachers, and therefore should be addressed by education programs. Second, to measure in someway the effect that teacher-student relationships have on student achievement. There has been little effort put into understanding the experiences of the beginning teachers forming these teacher-student relationships for the first time. You will be given the opportunity to relate your own experiences as well as the chance to listen to the stories of others going through similar experiences and perhaps gain insight from them. It is my intent to offer you, as a participant, the opportunity to share your experiences with me and a few of your peers at the same stage as you, in an attempt to determine the significance of your experiences and relate these to your education program as well as relating them to larger issues such as teacher longevity.

My intent is to use a number of tools to allow you to relate your experiences forming relationships with your students. First you will be asked to complete a brief survey which has been used by other researchers as a measure of interpersonal awareness. The survey will be completed once at the beginning, and then at the end of each of your student teaching rounds and at the end of your first semester of inservice teaching. Second I will ask you to keep a daily journal of your experiences and thoughts through the weeks of your teaching that you will share with me regularly. Third, you will be asked to attend brief 1 – 2 hr meetings with the other participants once a week during your IPT teaching, once every 2-weeks during your APT teaching and once a month during your first semester of inservice teaching. Lastly, I will ask for permission to visit you while teaching, to act as an observer of you in action. This is solely to allow me some idea of the context of your experiences and to perhaps provide more accurate feedback to your concerns and reflections.

If you have any questions regarding what is involved please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your help with this, it is appreciated greatly.

Sincerely
Mark Hirschkorn

Appendix G: Consent Form

Title of Research Study: Beginning Teachers' Student Teacher Relationship Experiences

I, _____, hereby [consent / do not consent]
(print name of adult)
to participate in the study of teacher-student relationships done by Mark Hirschkorn. This will involve a survey, keeping a journal, periodic classroom visits and attending group interviews with other participants.

I understand that:

- I have the right not to participate.
- I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty and any collected data will be withdrawn from the data base and not included in the study.
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially and discussed only with the research supervisor.
- Any information that identifies me will be kept secure for 5 years and then destroyed.
- I will not be identifiable in any documents resulting from this research.

I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:

- Research Dissertation
- Presentations and written articles for other educators.

_____ Sate Signed:_____
(signature)

For further information concerning the completion of the form, please contact:

Mark Hirschkorn	David Geelan	Dennis Sumara
(780) 953 – 4924	(780) 492 - 3674	(780) 492 – 3674
(Researcher)	(Supervisors)	(Graduate Coordinator)

Please return this form, whether consent is given or not to:

Mark Hirschkorn
Office: Education South – Rm. 368
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

"The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board (EE REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EE REB at (780) 492-3751."